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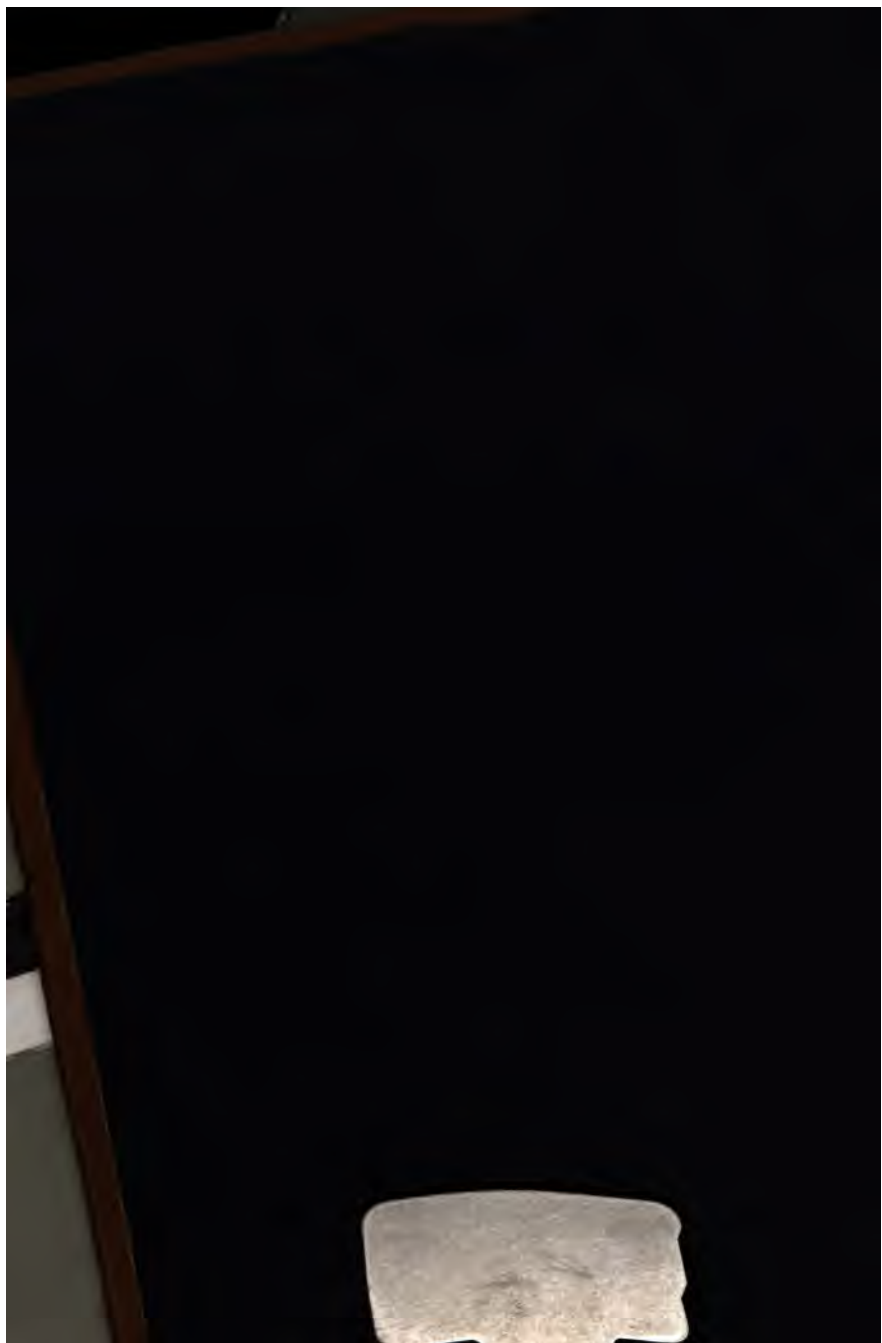
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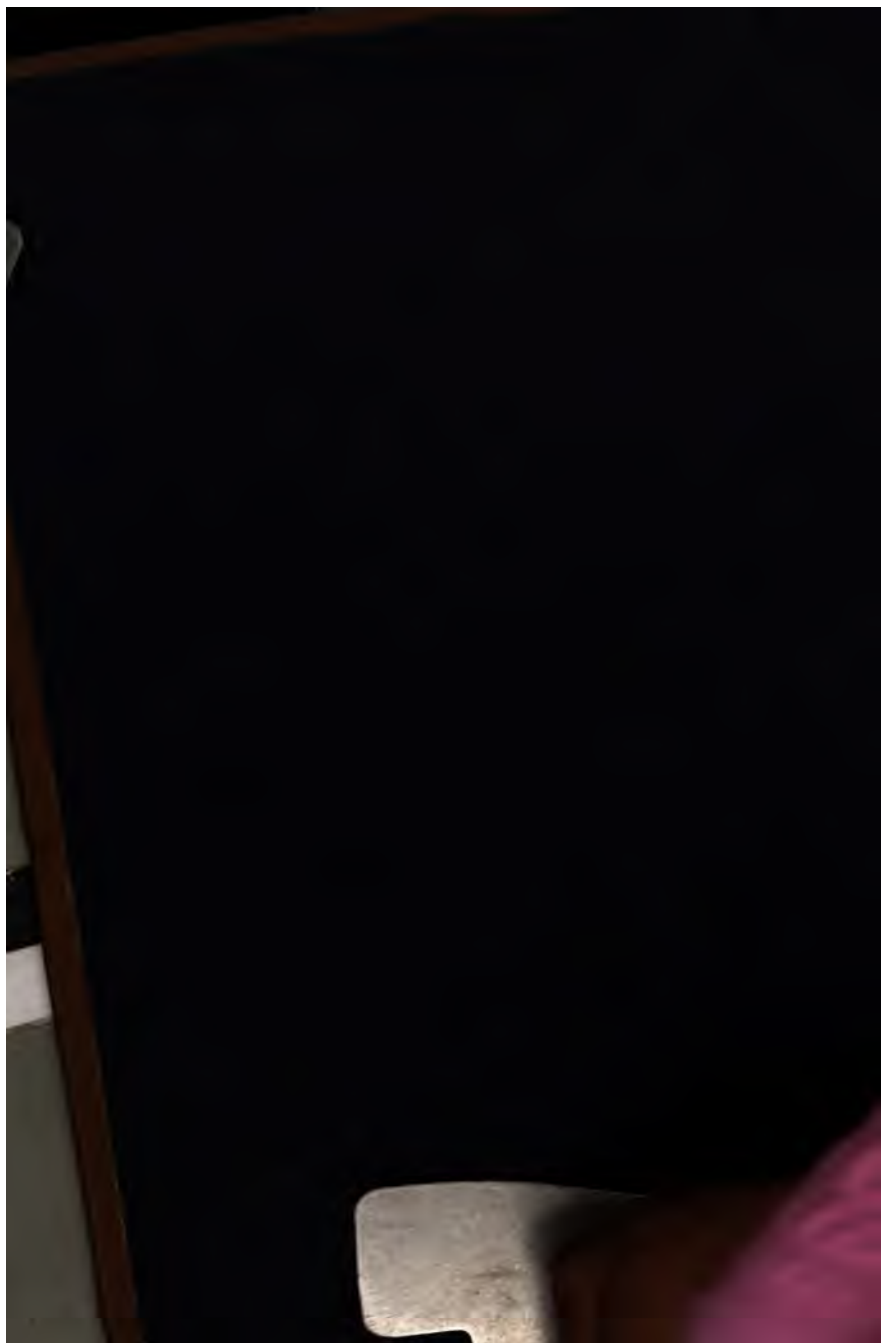
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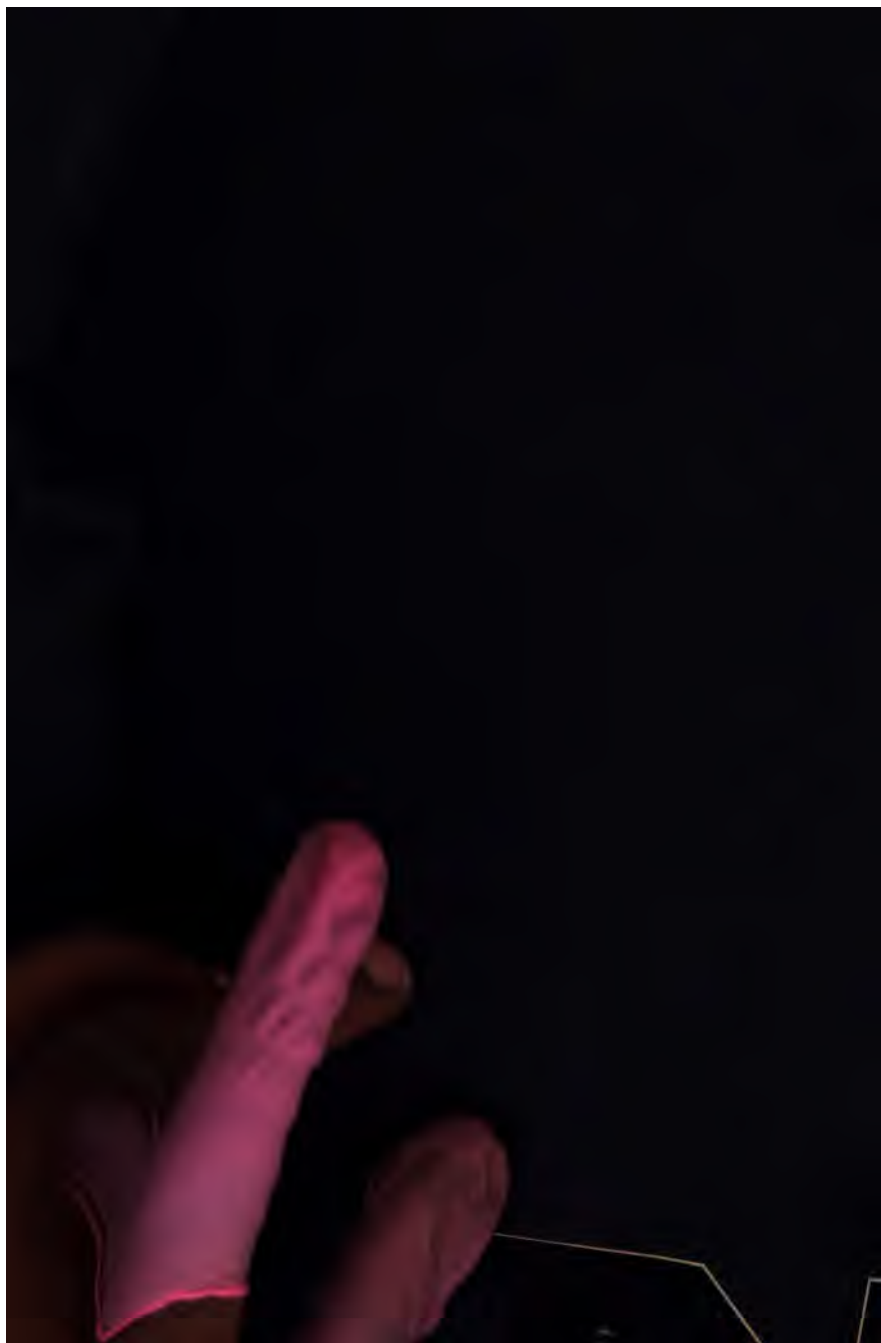












DAILY READINGS FOR A YEAR.

BY
ELIZABETH SPOONER.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.



LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS;
4, ROYAL EXCHANGE; AND 48, PICCADILLY.
NEW YORK: POTT, YOUNG AND CO.

1880.

141. m. 804.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

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DAILY READINGS FOR A YEAR.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

JANUARY 1.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called Jesus.—LUKE ii. 21.

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts !
Thou Fount of life ! Thou Light of men !
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

Thy Truth unchanged hath ever stood ;
Thou savest those that on Thee call ;
To them that seek Thee, Thou art good ;
To them that find Thee, all in all !

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still !
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast ;
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see ;
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay !

Make all our moments calm and bright !

Chase the dark night of sin away,

Shed o'er the world Thy Holy Light.

From St. BERNARD.

JANUARY 2.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath
to us.—1 JOHN iv. 16.

Think, then, if the delights of close and cordial friendship be so great, what delight we shall have in the friendship of the Most High, and in our mutual amity in Jesus Christ, and in the dearest love and comfort in the saints! Surely this will be a closer and stricter friendship than ever was betwixt any friends on earth. And these will be more lovely, more desirable friends than any that ever the sun beheld; and both our affections to our Father and our Saviour, but especially His affection to us, will be such as here we never knew. As spirits are so much more powerful than flesh, that one angel can destroy a host, so also are their affections more strong and powerful. We shall then love a thousand times more strongly and sweetly than now we can; and as all the attributes and works of God are incomprehensible, so is the attribute and work of love. He will love us many thousand times more than we, even at the perfectest, are able to love Him. What joy, then, will there be in this mutual love!—BAXTER.

JANUARY 3.

I entreated Thy favour with my whole heart; be merciful unto me according to Thy word.—PSALM cxix. 58.

When thou kneelest down in secret or public prayer, let it be in hope to get thy heart nearer God before thou risest from thy knees. When thou openest thy Bible or other books, let it be with this hope, to meet with some passage of divine truth, and some such blessings of the Spirit with it, as may raise thine affections nearer heaven, and give thee a fuller taste thereof. When thou art setting thy foot out of the door to go to the public ordinance and worship, say, "I hope to meet with somewhat from God that may raise my affections before I return. I hope the Spirit may meet me. I hope that Christ may appear to me in the way, shine about me with light from heaven, and let me hear His instructing and reviving voice, and cause the scales to fall from my eyes, that I may see more of that glory than I ever yet saw. I hope my Lord will take my heart in hand, and bring it within the view of rest, and set it before His Father's presence, that I may return, as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, glorifying and praising God for all the things I have heard and seen."—BAXTER.

JANUARY 4.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar.—LUKE i. 11.

How far would I go to see one of those blessed angels which appeared to Abraham, to Lot, to John, etc., or to speak with Enoch, with Elias, with any saint who had lived with God, especially if he would resolve all my doubts, and describe to me the celestial habitations! How much more desirable must it needs be to live with these blessed saints and angels, and to see and possess as well as they. It was a happy dwelling that the twelve apostles had with Christ. To be always in His company, and see His face, and hear Him open to them the mysteries of the kingdom; but it will be another kind of happiness to dwell with Him in glory. . . . It will be another kind of privilege which I shall enjoy when I see Him in His glory, and not in His wounds, and shall have a fuller sense of His love than John did here. If they that heard Christ speak on earth were astonished at His wisdom and answers, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth, how shall I be affected then, to behold Him in His majesty!—BAXTER.

JANUARY 5.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.—2 PETER i. 4.

Reader, I entreat thee to ponder it why God should reveal so much of His counsel, and tell us beforehand of the joys we shall possess, but only that He would have us know it for our joy. If it had not been to make comfortable our present life, and fill us with the delights of our foreknown blessedness, He might have kept His purpose to Himself, and never have let us know till we come to enjoy it, or have revealed it to us till death hath discovered it, what He meant to do with us in the world to come. But it hath pleased our Father to open His counsel, and to let us know the very intent of His heart, and to acquaint us with the eternal extent of His love; and all this that our joy may be full, and we might live as the heirs of such a kingdom. And shall we now overlook all as if He had revealed no such matter? Shall we live in earthly cares and sorrows as if we knew of no such thing, and rejoice no more in these discoveries as if the Lord had never written it? Hath God sealed thee a patent of heaven, and dost thou let it lie by thee as if thou hadst forgot it? Oh that our hearts were as high as our hopes, and our hopes as high as these infallible promises!—BAXTER.

EPIPHANY.

JANUARY 6.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great
joy.—MATTHEW ii. 10.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid !
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid !

Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining ;
Low lies His head, with the beasts of the stall ;
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining ;
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine ;
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine ?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid !
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid !

HEBER.

JANUARY 7.

Brief life is here our portion ;
Brief sorrow, short-lived care :
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there.

If we have some mixed comforts here, they are scarce enough to sweeten our crosses ; or if we have some short and smiling intermissions, it is scarce time enough to breathe us in, and to prepare our tacklings for the next storm. If one wave pass by, another succeeds, and if the night be over, and the day come, yet will it soon be night again. Oh for the blessed tranquillity of that region where there is nothing but sweet continued peace ! No succession of joy there, because there is no intermission. Our lives will be but one joy, as our time will be changed into one eternity. O healthful place where none are sick ! O fortunate land, where all are kings ! O place most holy, where all are priests ! How free a state where none are servants save to their supreme Monarch ! For it shall come to pass in that day the Lord shall give us rest from our sorrow, and our fear, and from the hard bondage wherein we served. Hold on, then, a little longer, O my soul ; bear with the infirmities of thy earthly tabernacle ; endure that share of sorrows that the love of thy Father shall impose ; it will be thus but a little while, the sound of thy Redeemer's feet are even at the door, and thine own deliverance nearer than many others.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 8.

The general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.—HEBREWS xii. 23.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days,
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.

O holy hope and high humility,
High as the heavens above !
These are your walks, and you have shown them me
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death ! the jewel of the just !
Shining nowhere but in the dark !
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark !

HENRY VAUGHAN.

JANUARY 9.

Of whom the world was not worthy.—HEBREWS xi. 38.

Rouse thyself up, O my soul, and consider ; can the foresight of glory make others embrace the stake, and welcome the faggot, and kiss the cross, and refuse deliverance ? And can it not make thee cheerful under lesser sufferings ? Can it sweeten the flames to them, and can it not sweeten thy life, or thy sickness, or natural death ? If a glimpse could make Moses' face to shine, and Peter on the Mount so transported, and Paul so exalted, and John so wrapt up in the Spirit, why should it not somewhat

revive me with delight? Doubtless it would, if my thoughts were more believing. Is it not the same heaven which they and I must live in? Is not their God, their Christ, their crown, and mine the same? Oh, had I such true and clear apprehensions of God, and such a true understanding of His Word as I desire; could I but trust Him as fully in all my straits; could I make God my constant desire and delight, I would not then envy the world their honours or pleasures; nor change my happiness with a Cæsar or Alexander.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 10.

Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.—REVELATION iv. 1.

The soul that loves ascends frequently, and runs familiarly through the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, visiting the patriarchs and prophets, saluting the apostles, admiring the armies of martyrs and confessors. So do thou lead on thy heart, as from street to street, bringing it into the palace of the great King; lead it, as it were, from chamber to chamber, say to it; "Here must I lodge, here must I live, here must I praise, here must I love, and be beloved. I must shortly be one of the heavenly choir; I shall then be better skilled to the music. Amongst this blessed company must I take my place. My voice must join to make up the melody. My tears will then be taken away, my

groans turned to another tune. My cottage of clay will be changed to this palace, and my prison rags to these splendid robes. My sordid flesh shall be put off, and such a sunlike spiritual body put on. "For the former things are done away." "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

JANUARY 11.

O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people.

PSALM cxvii. 1.

Be much in that angelic work of praise. As the most heavenly spirits will have the most heavenly employment, so the more heavenly the employment, the more will it make the spirit heavenly. Though the heart be the fountain of all our actions, and the actions will be usually of the quality of the heart, yet do those actions, by a kind of reflection, work much on the heart from whence they spring. The like, also, may be said of our speeches. So that the work of praising God, being the most heavenly work, is likely to raise us to the most heavenly temper. Singing of praise is a most profitable duty, because it is so delightful, as it were, to God Himself, that He hath made it His people's eternal work, for they shall sing the Song of Moses, and the Song of the Lamb. The richest emblem of heaven that I know upon earth, is, when the people of God, in the deep sense of His excellency and bounty, from hearts

abounding with love and joy, do join together, both in heart and voice, in the cheerful and melodious singing of His praises.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 12.

“Christian ! seek not yet repose,”
Hear thy guardian angel say ;
Thou art in the midst of foes ;
“Watch and pray.”

Should Israel have settled his rest in the wilderness among serpents and enemies, and heaviness, and famine? Should Noah have made the ark his home, and been loath to come forth when the waters were fallen? Should the mariner choose his dwelling on the sea, and settle his rest in the midst of rocks and sands, and raging tempests? Should a soldier rest in the midst of fight, when he is in the very thickest of his enemies and the instruments of death compass him about? I think he cares not how soon the battle is over. And are not Christians such travellers, such mariners, such soldiers? Have you not fears within, and troubles without? Are we not in the thickest of continual dangers? We cannot eat, drink, sleep, labour, pray, hear, etc., but in the midst of snares and perils, and shall we sit down and rest here? O Christian, follow thy work, look to thy danger, and hold on to the end; win the field, and come off the ground, before thou think of a settling rest.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 13.

He was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words.

2 CORINTHIANS xii. 4.

If I had spoke with Paul when he was new come down from the third heavens, and he might have revealed to me the things which he had seen; oh, what would I give for an hour's such conference! How far would I go to hear such a narration! Why, I must shortly see those very things myself: yea, and far more than Paul was then capable of seeing; and yet I shall see no more than I shall possess. If I had but spoken one hour with Lazarus when he was risen from the dead, and heard him describe the things which he had seen in another world, if God would permit and enable him thereto, what a joyful discourse would that have been! How many thousand books may I read before I could know so much as he could have told me in that hour! If God would have suffered him to tell what he had seen, the Jews would have thronged more to hear him than they did to see him. Oh, but this would have been nothing to the sight itself, and to the fruition of all that which Lazarus saw.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 14.

If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.—JOHN xiv. 14.

He will do the very thing we ask if that be best ; otherwise He will do something for us which, all things considered, shall be better ; so that our prayer is still answered : as, if we ask something that is really good, so that it would conduce to some good end we have in our eye, if He gives us something that will conduce more to that end than that particular thing we asked would, He doth not only do what we asked, but more. As when St. Paul prayed that the thorn in his flesh might be removed, and our Lord answered, " My grace is sufficient for thee ; " the apostle looked upon his prayer as fully answered, although he had not the very thing he prayed for ; because it was better to have the grace of Christ always sufficient for him, than to be freed from any particular trouble. And thus it is that Christ usually doth what we ask ; if He doth not do the thing itself, He doth that which is better, and which we, therefore, would have asked, if we had known it as well as He.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 15.

O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body
of this death ?—ROMANS vii. 24.

Lord, many times I am aweary quite
Of mine own self, my sin, my vanity—
Yet be not Thou, or I am lost outright,
Weary of me.

And hate against myself I often bear,
And enter with myself in fierce debate :
Take Thou my part against myself, nor share
In that just hate.

Best friends might loathe us if what things perverse
We know of our own selves, they also knew :
Lord, Holy One ! if Thou who knowest worse
Should loathe us too !

TRENCH.

JANUARY 16.

I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the taber-
nacle of God is with men.—REVELATION xxi. 8.

And what, we may ask, will be the employment
of the redeemed in their future home ? We may
not doubt that the study of the works of God,
which even here have engaged the intellect and
constituted the delight of the most excellent among
the children of men, will there be continued. What

mines of gladdening contemplation exist in the millions of forms and varieties of which this material world is composed! How inexhaustible the treasures of earth, sea, and sky! And as the creation around us is the means of life and comfort, of usefulness and instruction, of gratitude and praise to all the dwellers here below; so we have every reason to believe the new creation, the new heaven and earth which shall replace those which now exist, will be the means of enjoyment and happiness to the redeemed, in a degree far beyond our present powers of conception. When we call to mind, indeed, that there God will be all in all, His glory pervading all, and sustaining all things, a field of contemplation opens before us, not only exalted and immense, but literally infinite and divine.—BADGER.

JANUARY 17.

When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.—PROVERBS xvi. 7.

And, not only they, but all things else shall work for your good, so long as ye continue in His favour who governs and disposes of all things as He pleases. For when ye are reconciled to Him, He will look upon you as His friends, His favourites, His children, and will deal accordingly with you. He will take you under His own particular care and conduct. He will *hide you under His wings*, that *no evil may come near*, to hurt you. He will bless

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and sanctify all occurrences to you; He will provide all things necessary, that as you have nothing that is evil, so you may want nothing that is good for you. He will cause *the light of His countenance to shine upon you*. He will guide you by His counsel, assist you by His grace, protect you by His power; enlighten, quicken, actuate, support, and strengthen you by His Holy Spirit, that you may pass through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, so as to come at last to live with Him and His holy angels in the perfect vision and fruition of his eternal Godhead.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 18.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 21.

The apostle, speaking of the resurrection of the just, saith, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." Though it be still a body, and the same body that it was before, as to the substance of it (for otherwise it would not be properly a resurrection), yet the qualities of it shall be much altered; it shall then be an incorruptible, a glorious, a spiritual, a powerful body; a body still, but endued with such spiritual qualities, that it shall be as active, as nimble, as tractable, every way as obedient to the will and motions of the soul, as if itself also was a

spirit; for it shall then be raised to the highest degree of purity, glory, and perfection, that matter is capable of, being made as like as it is possible to the body of Christ Himself. And, therefore, as He now doth, so shall the righteous shine forth then as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 19.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world,
and lose his own soul?—MATTHEW xvi. 26.

Are there such men in the world, men who lose their souls to gain the world? Surely it is impossible; for men are reasonable creatures and able to discern between good and evil. We see every day how ingenious they are in managing their trades and merchandise to their best advantage; how careful not to be imposed upon in any matter; how strict and exact in all their bargains and contracts; how prudent and critical in the choice of what they buy; how, then, can it be imagined that any should be so weak, or rather so mad, as to sell all they have for nothing; or, which is all one, to *lose their own souls to gain the world*? It is true, one cannot but wonder there should be such men in the world, and I could heartily wish there were none; but our blessed Saviour, who is thoroughly acquainted with all men's hearts and actions, here plainly supposeth there are such men in the world. Indeed, this hath been the great reason all along

why, of those who profess the Christian religion, there are so few who come up to it, even because, if they should do so, they must part with something they have already gotten, or else be hindered in the getting more of this world.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 20.

Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

REVELATION xxii. 20.

Look for, and hasten unto, and prepare for, the coming of the day of God, ye mourners of Zion; ye who, whether in the morning or the noontide or the evening of your days, have become truly sensible of your sinfulness; ye who have felt the fallacy of every earthly expectation, the deceitfulness of earthly plans, the vanity of earthly friendships. You have, perchance, encouraged some worldly hope which has now forsaken you; you have formed some intimacy which now pierces you through with sorrow; you have felt the pangs of an alarmed conscience, and have fled in faith to Him whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin. If so, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. O stay and comfort to weak, sorrowful, and disconsolate sojourners in this world of trial! O fixed and abiding prospect amidst the vicissitudes of this transitory life! Yet a little while, and He that cometh will come and will not tarry; and then those who love

His appearing shall assuredly be with Him, and shall dwell with Him in that new world where all shall be quietness and assurance for ever.—BADGER.

JANUARY 31.

And Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him.—GENESIS v. 24.

A man that is much in conversing above, hath truer and livelier apprehensions concerning God and his soul, than any reading or learning can beget ; though, perhaps, he may be ignorant in divers controversies and matters that less concern salvation, yet those truths which must establish his soul, and preserve him from temptation, he knows far better than the greatest scholars ; he hath so deep an insight into the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, the brutishness of fleshly sensual delights, that temptations have little power on him, for these earthly vanities are Satan's baits, which, though they may take much with the undiscerning world, yet, with the clear-sighted, they have lost their force. Satan's temptations are laid on the earth, earth is the place, and earth is the ordinary bait. How shall these ensnare the Christian, who hath left the earth and walks with God ? But, alas, we keep not long so high, but down we must to the earth again, and then we are taken.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 22.

O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.—ISAIAH xliv. 21.

TO MYSELF.

Let nothing make thee sad or fretful
Or too regretful,
Be still;
What God hath ordered must be right,
Then find in it thine own delight,
My will.

Why should'st thou fill to-day with sorrow
About to-morrow,
My heart?
One watches all, with care most true;
Doubt not that He will give thee too
Thy part.

Only be steadfast, never waver,
Nor seek earth's favour,
But rest;
Thou knowest what God's will must be,
For all His creatures,—so, for thee,
The best.

JANUARY 23.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also
in Me.—JOHN xiv. 1.

Jesus Christ is infinitely more above the devil in knowledge and power than you are below him; do but believe and trust in Him, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against you; but whatsoever

temptation fall upon you He will make way for your escape. This we learn from His own mouth, where he saith to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you, as wheat: but I have prayed that thy faith fail not." From whence we may observe that the devil could do St. Peter no hurt unless his faith failed, that our Lord had taken care that his faith should not fail, and by consequence, that the devil should no way hurt him, as he afterwards found by experience; and therefore the same apostle directs all Christians to take the same course whensoever they are tempted, for, having acquainted them that the devil goeth about *seeking whom he may devour*, he adds, *whom resist steadfast in the faith*; implying that so long as they continued steadfast in the faith of Christ all the power of hell could never prevail against them; and that's the reason why St. Paul calls it the shield of faith, because by it we are able to *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 24.

I go to prepare a place for you.—JOHN xiv. 2.

Oh what a blessed day will that be when I shall have all mercy, perfection of mercy, nothing but mercy, and fully enjoy the Lord of mercy Himself! When I shall stand on the shore, and look back upon the raging seas which I have safely passed! When I shall, in safe and full possession of glory, look

back upon my pains and troubles, and fears and tears, and all the mercies which I here received; and then shall behold the glory enjoyed there, which was the end of all this! Oh what a blessed view will that be! O glorious prospect which I shall have on the celestial mount Zion! Is it possible that there shall be any defect of joy, or my heart not raised when I am so raised? If one drop of lively faith were mixed with these considerations, oh what work would they make in my breast, and what a heaven-ravished heart should I carry within me! Fain would I believe; "Lord, help my unbelief."—**BAXTER.**

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

JANUARY 25.

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.—**ACTS ix. 5.**

St. Paul claimed to be one of the witnesses of the resurrection. He believed himself to have been actually spoken to, conversed with, from heaven by a human voice, in the Hebrew tongue, using intelligible words, familiar speech, and appealing to the facts of his history as intimately known—seen through and through by the speaker. From that moment, whatever else he doubted, he never doubted the risen life, he never doubted the resurrection from death of that Jesus whom all admitted to have been crucified. It became the solid rock of his faith

and of his conviction. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" . . . This was a conviction strong for work, powerful for self-denial, triumphant over sin, fruitful in well-doing. . . . To St. Paul, to live was Christ. He could not conceive the occupation which had not Christ in it. Faith was the spiritual sight of the living Saviour. Prayer was the making definite requests known to the living Saviour. The study of the Bible was the reading of a letter from the living Saviour. Public worship was the meeting of a number of persons for the purpose of hearing and telling of the living Saviour. Thus it was in everything ; and the enumeration of the possible occupations of the man would be but the connecting of each with the will, and yet more with the living life, of Christ, the redemption and the resurrection.—DR. VAUGHAN.

JANUARY 28.

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and
I will give you rest.—MATTHEW xi. 28.

Rouse up thyself once more, then, O my soul, and try and exercise thy spiritual appetite ; though thou art ignorant and unbelieving, yet art thou reasonable, and therefore must needs desire a happiness and rest ; nor canst thou surely be so unreasonable as to dream of attaining it here on earth. Thou knowest, to thy sorrow, that thou art not yet at thy rest, and thy own feeling doth convince thee of thy

present unhappiness; and dost thou know that thou art restless, and yet art willing to continue so? art thou neither happy in deed nor in desire? art thou neither well nor wouldst be well? When my flesh is pained and languisheth under consuming sickness, how heartily and frequently do I cry out, "Oh when shall I be eased of this pain? . . . How, then, should I long for my final, full recovery! There is no weeping, nor pain, nor sickness, nor complaints. Oh when shall I arrive at that safe and quiet harbour where is none of these storms and waves, and dangers: when I shall never more have a weary, restless night or day?—BAXTER.

JANUARY 27.

But one thing is needful.—LUKE x. 42.

Wherefore, I pray and beseech you all, as ye have any regard to your own good and welfare, that ye would, for the future, concern yourselves in good earnest about your souls; at least, take as much care of them as ye do for the world. Ye study all ways possible to prevent any loss in your estates or trades; do the same for your souls: take all the heed ye can that they be not lost for ever. You contrive and forecast each day how to manage your worldly affairs to the best advantage; do the same for your soul: let no day pass without considering how to work out your salvation the most effectually, and to make your calling and election sure. You

often cast up your books to see how you thrive in the world; do the same for your souls: examine yourselves often, whether ye be in the faith, and whether you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 28.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God.—2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

The Scripture, being given by inspiration of God, is *profitable for doctrine*, or teaching us all things necessary for men to know, that they may be saved; for the Holy Scripture was not intended to teach men mathematics, or logic, or natural philosophy, or any other art or science, but only how to serve and glorify God upon earth, so as to get at last to heaven. Therefore it is called the *engrafted word*, which is *able to save our souls*. Also, *The holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation*. That is to be wise indeed, and to good purpose. Whatsoever else goes under the name of wisdom, will be found at last to be no better than folly or madness, which may do us mischief, but never can do us any good. This will both make us good, and do us good, all the good we can desire; but this wisdom can be no way attained, but only by the Word of God; and there we may certainly find it, for “the law is an undefiled law, converting the soul.”—BEVERIDGE.

JANUARY 29.

Rest in the Lord.—PSALM xxxvii. 7.

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by ;
Let Us (said He) pour on him all we can :
Let the world's riches which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way ;
Then beauty flowèd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure ;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel on My creature
He would adore my gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature—
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness ;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

HERBERT.

JANUARY 30.

These are wells without water.—2 PETER ii. 17.

It is the ignorance of the emptiness of things below that makes men so overvalue them ; and it is ignorance of the high delights above, which is the cause that men so little mind them. If you see a purse of gold, and believe it be but stones or counters, it will not entice your affections to it. It

is not a thing's excellency in itself, but it is excellency known that provokes desire. If an ignorant man see a book containing the secret of arts or sciences, yet he values it no more than a common piece, because he knows not what is in it; but he that knows it doth highly value it; his very mind is set upon it. As the Jews inquired after Elias, when Christ tells them that verily Elias is already come, "and ye knew him not," so men inquire after happiness and delight when it is offered to them in the promise of rest, and they know it not, but trample it under foot; and as the Jews killed the Messiah, while they waited for the Me-siah, and that because they did not know Him, "for had they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," so does the world cry out for rest, and busily seek for delight and happiness, and this because they thoroughly know it not; for did they know thoroughly what it is, they could not so slight the everlasting treasure.—BAXTER.

JANUARY 31.

O praise the Lord : for it is a good thing to sing praises to our God.—PSALM cxlvii. 1.

To recount and celebrate the wisdom, the mercy, the truth, the power, and all the works of God, our Maker, our Saviour, our Sanctifier, our God,—this is a joyful and pleasant thing indeed; it is the work of heaven, the only place where perfect joy and

pleasure can be had. Though we know but little of what they do there, we know they praise God there, and seldom read of anything else they do. This is their constant business and recreation too, their employment and their pleasure both together, and so it should be ours; for we have the same obligations upon us to be always praising God as they have, and it is our own fault if we do not take pleasure in it as they do. . . . Although we be by ourselves, and have none else to join with us in it, we praise God with angels, we praise God with the spirits of just men made perfect, we praise Him with all the host of heaven, doing the same thing here below, which they at the same time are always doing above.—BEVERIDGE.

FEBRUARY 1.

O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me.

PSALM cxxxix. 1.

Thou knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow
Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest;
Cares of to-day, and burdens for to-morrow,
Blessings implored, and sins to be confessed;
I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,
And lay them at Thy feet: Thou knowest, Lord.

Thou knowest all the present, each temptation,
Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear;
All to myself assigned of tribulation,
Or to beloved ones, than self more dear;
All pensive memories, as I journey on,
Longings for vanished smiles and voices gone.

Thou knowest all the future—gleams of gladness,
By stormy clouds too quickly overcast,—
Hours of sweet fellowship, and parting sadness,
And the dark river to be crossed at last !
Oh ! what could confidence and hope afford
To tread that path, but this—*Thou knowest, Lord ?*

PURIFICATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

FEBRUARY 2.

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

MATTHEW v. 8.

Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God ;
The secret of the Lord is theirs ;
Their soul is Christ's abode.
Might mortal thought presume
To guess an angel's lay,
Such are the notes that echo through
The courts of heaven to-day.
Such the triumphal hymns
On Sion's Prince that wait,
In high procession passing on
Towards His temple gate.
Wide open from that hour
The temple gates are set,
And still the saints rejoicing there
The holy Child have met.

KEBLE.

FEBRUARY 3.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 14.

Is not heaven more truly and properly our home, where we must take up our everlasting abode, than this earth? We are heirs, and that is our inheritance, even an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." We are here in continual distress and want, and there lies our substance; we are here fain to be beholden to others, and there lies our perpetual treasure; yea, the very hope of our souls is there: all our hope of relief from our distresses; all our hope of happiness when we are here miserable; all this hope is laid up for us in heaven. Why, beloved Christians, have we so much interest, and so little affection; so much interest, and so seldom thoughts? Are we not ashamed of this? Doth it become us to be delighted in the company of strangers, so as to forget our Father and our Lord, our best and dearest friends; or to be so besotted with borrowed trifles, as to forget our own profession and treasure? Men use in other things to overlove and overvalue their own, and too much to mind their interests. Oh that we would mind our own inheritance, and value it but half as it doth deserve!—BAXTER.

FEBRUARY 4.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.—1 CORINTHIANS ii. 9.

Think, then, in thy meditations, if these things, which are but servants to sinful men, are yet so full of mysterious worth, what then is that place, where God Himself doth dwell, and is prepared for the just who are perfected with Christ? When thou walkest forth in the evening, look upon the stars how they glisten, and in what number they bespangle the firmament. If in the day-time, look up at the glorious sun. But all this is nothing to the glory of heaven. Yonder sun must then be laid aside as useless, for it would not be seen, for the brightness of God. So think of the rest of the creatures. This whole earth is but My Father's footstool. So much wisdom and power as appeareth in these earthly things, so much, and far much more greatness and goodness and loving delights shall I enjoy in the actual fruition of God. Surely, if the rain which rains, and the sun which shines on the just and unjust, be so wonderful; the sun then, which must shine on none but saints and angels, must needs be wonderful and ravishing in glory.—
BAXTER.

FEBRUARY 5.

And to the spirits of just men made perfect.—HEBREWS xii. 23.

What a blessed company of glorious saints are there! How cheerful do they look; how happily do they live; how pleasant are they in their conversation one with another; how free are they from care; how full of love and joy, of grace and goodness, and of every thing that can ever be desired to make men happy! By faith we may behold them as St. John did, *all clothed in white*, with palms in their hands and crowns on their heads, sometimes falling down and worshipping, and then praising and magnifying, the most high God, and singing hallelujah to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore. Yea, by faith we may behold Almighty God Himself, the chiefest, the only good, smiling upon them, rejoicing over them, and manifesting Himself as reconciled to them, well pleased with them; the sight and apprehensions whereof cannot but ravish and transport their hearts into the highest raptures and extasies of joy and praise and thankfulness for so great, so infinite a favour as that is. All this, and infinitely more than I am able to express, my faith represents to me whensoever it fixes itself on heaven, which may justly make us every one cry out with the Psalmist, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest!"—BEVERIDGE.

FEBRUARY 6.

Love not the world, nor the things of the world.—1 JOHN ii. 15.

We dote upon it, nevertheless. We have love enough if the world require it, and thoughts enough to pursue our profits. How delightfully and unweariedly can we think of vanity, and day after day employ our mind about the creature; and have we no thought of this our rest? How freely and how frequently can we think of our pleasures, our friends, our wants, our flesh, our lusts, our common labours, our news; yea, our very miseries, our wrongs, our sufferings, our fears! But where is the Christian whose heart is on his rest? Why sirs, what is the matter? Why are we not taken up with the views of glory, and our souls more accustomed to these delightful meditations? Are we so full of joy that we need no more? or is there no matter in heaven for our joyous thoughts? or rather, are not our hearts carnal and blockish? Earth will to earth. Had we more spirit, it would be otherwise with us.—BAXTER.

FEBRUARY 7.

Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown.—REVELATION iii. 11.

Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on which shone like gold. Those also that met them had harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the city rang again for joy; and that it was said unto them, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, "Blessing, honour, glory and power, be to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them; and behold, the city shone like the sun, the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings; and they answered one another without intermission, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord." And after that they shut up the gates, which when I had seen I wished myself among them.—BUNYAN.

FEBRUARY 8.

O praise the Lord, for the Lord is gracious.—PSALM CXXV. 3.

My God, I thank Thee, who hast made
The earth so bright :
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light ;
So many glorious things are here
Noble and right !

I thank Thee *more* that all our joy
Is touched with pain ;
That shadows fall on brightest hours ;
That thorns remain ;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide
And not our chain.

For Thou who knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings,
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings,
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things.

A. PROCTER.

FEBRUARY 9.

Blessed are they that mourn.—MATTHEW v. 4.

It was a high speech of Seneca, that the "good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired." The virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of

the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes, and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.—BACON.

FEBRUARY 10.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate.

One of the best instruments for contentedness is the sedulous application of our minds to honest employment. Honest studies and cares divert our minds, and drive sad thoughts from them; they cheer our spirits with wholesome food and pleasant entertainments; they yield good fruits and a success accompanied with satisfaction, which will extinguish or temper discontent. While we are studious or active, discontent cannot easily creep in, or will be quickly stifled. Idleness is the great mother or nurse of discontent; it layeth the mind open for melancholy conceits to enter; it yieldeth harbour to them; and it depriveth of all the remedies and allays

which business affordeth. Reciprocally, discontent also begetteth idleness, and by it groweth; they are like ice and water arising each out of the other. We should therefore not suffer any sadness so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our business, for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.—BARROW.

FEBRUARY 11.

I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.—1 THESSALONIANS iv. 13.

Now I saw in my dream, that by this time the pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground, and entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant; the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and they saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth day and night, wherefore it was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof, for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven.—BUNYAN.

FEBRUARY 12.

As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.

GALATIANS vi. 10.

To work, what incalculable sources of cultivation lie in that process, in that attempt. How it lays hold of the whole man, thereby to awaken dormant faculties, root out old errors, at every step! He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain it is to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing; up and be doing! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee; grapple with real nature; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. A new light will rise on thee at the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly a boundless significance lies in work; whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much which is of indispensable use, but which he who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing. To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier, more blessed, less accursed,—oh, this is great—it is a work for God.—T. CARLYLE.

FEBRUARY 13.

No Cross! no Crown!

In his sufferings the Christian is often tempted to think himself forgotten. But his afflictions are the clearest proof that he is an object of God's fatherly discipline. Satan would give the man the

thing his heart is set on. But God hath better things in reserve for His children, and they must be brought to desire them and to seek them, and this will be through the wreck and sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear. The Christian prays for fuller manifestations of Christ's glory and His love to him. But he is often aware that this is in truth praying to be brought into the furnace; for in the furnace only it is that Christ can walk with His friends to display, in their preservation and deliverance, His own almighty power. Dark and trying dispensations may be needful for some stubborn minds. To such the language of God is of this kind: "I will not wholly hide myself, I will be seen by thee; but thou shalt never meet me, except in a dark night, and in a storm."—CECIL.

FEBRUARY 14.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.—CREED.

Of man's whole terrestrial possessions and attainments unspeakably the noblest are his symbols, divine, or divine seeming, under which he marches and fights with victorious assurance in this life's battle: what we can call his realized ideals. Of which realized ideals, omitting the rest, consider only these two: his Church, or spiritual guidance; his kingship, or temporal one. The Church! what a world was there; richer than Golconda and the treasures of the world. Strong was he that had a

church, what we can call a church ; he stood thereby, though "In the centre of Immensities, on the conflux of Eternities," yet man-like towards God and man. The vague cheerless universe had become for him a firm city and dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in Belief—in these words well spoken, "I believe." Well might men prize their creeds, and raise stateliest temples for it, and reverend hierarchies, and give it the tithe of their substance ; it was worth living for, and dying for.—T. CARLYLE.

FEBRUARY 15.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.—MATTHEW xiii. 9.

Dreamer, waken ! loiterer, hasten !
What thy task is, understand ;
Thou art here to purchase substance,
And the price is in thy hand.

Has the tumult of the market
All thy sense confused and drowned ?
Do its glistening wares entice thee ?
Or its shouts and cries confound ?

Oh, beware ! lest thy Lord's business
Be forgotten ; while thy gaze
Is on every show and pageant
Which the giddy square displays.

Barter not His gold for pebbles,
Do not trade in vanities !—
Pearls there are of price, and jewels
For the purchase of the wise.

TRENCH.

FEBRUARY 16.

With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to man.

EPHESIANS vi. 7.

It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought for every individual man, that his earthly influence which has had a commencement, will never, through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end. What is done, is done; has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time. Here on earth we are as soldiers fighting in a foreign land, that understand not the plan of the campaign, and have no need to understand it, seeing well what is at our hand to be done. Let us do it like soldiers, with submission, courage, with heroic joy. Behind us lie six thousand years of human effort, human conquest; before us is the boundless time, with its yet uncreated and unconquered continents, which we, even we, have to conquer, to create; and from the bosom of eternity shine for us celestial guiding stars.—T. CARLYLE.

FEBRUARY 17.

The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook.

PROVERBS xviii. 4.

Wisdom lifteth up the head of him that is of low degree, and maketh him to sit among great men. Commend not a man for his beauty, neither abhor a

man for his outward appearance. The bee is little among such as fly, but her fruit is the chief of sweet things. Boast not of thy clothing and raiment, and exalt not thyself in thy day of honour; for the works of the Lord are wonderful, and His works among men are hidden. Many kings have sat down upon the ground; and one that was never thought of hath worn the crown. Many mighty men have been greatly disgraced, and the honourable delivered into other men's hands. Blame not before thou hast examined the truth; understand first, and then rebuke. Answer not before thou hast heard the cause; neither interrupt men in the midst of their talk. Strive not in a matter that concerneth thee not, and sit not in judgment with sinners. My son, meddle not with many matters, for if thou meddle much thou shalt not be innocent. The blessing of the Lord is in the reward of the godly, and suddenly He maketh his blessing to flourish.—ECCLESIASTICUS.

FEBRUARY 18.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.—PSALM cxix. 71.

There is in each one of us a seed of eternal life, which lies dormant whilst we are occupied by seen things, by this passing world, with its joys and sorrows, but which springs and grows up unto God when we look at the unseen things beyond death. This world is broken and bankrupt; death is

through and through in all its parts, it is the valley of the shadow of death. Our life is under the sentence of death, and everything about us has death in it; and there is but one untainted, undying life in this wreck, and that is God; and He is as near us as the death is, for His is that seed of eternal life in us which lies unknown and unnoticed, though it contains the riches of eternity. Now, this is the purpose of pain, that we should be chased by it unto God, forced away from the dying things unto the undying, so that the blessed seed of God within us may spring up unto Him whose seed it is. It is still the voice of this seed, "Come unto me, ye wearied ones, and I will give you rest." This is the voice of Him who is despised and rejected of men, and His voice is not listened to; and yet there is no other rest.—T. ERSKINE.

FEBRUARY 19.

Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise
in thy latter end.—PROVERBS xix. 20.

Say not, I have enough and possess many things, and what evil can come to me hereafter. In the day of prosperity there is a forgetfulness of affliction; and in the day of affliction there is no more remembrance of prosperity. The affliction of an hour maketh a man forget pleasure. Judge none blessed before his death, for a man shall be known in his children. A friend cannot be known in

prosperity, and an enemy cannot be hid in adversity. He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith; and he that hath fellowship with a proud man shall be like unto him. Blessed is the man that doth meditate good things in wisdom, and that reasoneth of holy things by his understanding. He that considereth her ways in his heart shall also have understanding in her secrets. Before man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him; for the wisdom of the Lord is great, and He is mighty in power, and beholdeth all things. Say not, then, I will hide myself from the Lord: shall any remember me from above? I shall not be remembered among so many people; for what is my soul among such an infinite number of creatures. For the Lord's eyes are upon them that fear Him, and He knoweth every work of man.—ECCLESIASTICUS.

FEBRUARY 20.

This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

Exodus xvi. 15.

How often things appear to happen but for no other end but to provoke and to distress; and, indeed, things do happen to consume and wear out the carcases that must fall in the wilderness. Until they fall we cannot enter into the promised inheritance, and this is the manner of our Father's love therefore, to consume and waste that which hinders our entering in; and in all that consuming and

wasting and wearing out there is a love hidden, and that love, which is God's will in everything that happens, as the kernel is contained in the shell, is the food which God giveth us, that our souls may eat and live. This is the manna which is rained round our tents. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." How often, when my Father has given me this meat to eat have I said, "What is it? Is this the bread of heaven?" We would eat our own will—that is, the flesh pot of Egypt,—and God would have us eat His will, that we may be of one mind with Him, partaking of the Divine nature. How much easier it is to say this than to do it! But it is more sweet and more blessed to do it than to say it.—T. ERSKINE.

FEBRUARY 21.

The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.—PROVERBS xx. 15.

If thou be made the master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest; take diligent care for them, and so sit down. Speak thou that art the elder, for it becometh thee, but with sound judgment; and hinder not music. Pour not out works where there is a musician, and show not forth wisdom out of time. A concert of music in a banquet of wine is as a signet of carbuncle set in gold. Speak, young man, if there be need of thee, and yet scarcely when thou art twice asked. Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in

few words. Be as one that knoweth, and yet holdeth his tongue. If thou be among great men, make not thyself equal with them ; and when ancient men are in place, use not many words. Do nothing without advice, and when thou hast once done, repent not. Go not in a way wherein thou mayst fall, and stumble not among the stones. Be not confident in a plain way. Give not thy son and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee while thou livest, and give not thy goods to another, lest it repent thee, and thou entreat for the same again. As long as thou livest, and hast breath in thee, give not thyself over to any. In all thy works keep to thyself the pre-eminence ; leave not a stain in thine honour.—**ECCLESIASTICUS.**

FEBRUARY 23.

Get wisdom, get understanding.—**PROVERBS iv. 5.**

Use thou, but love not things given only with intent
To be alleviations of Thy banishment.

Ill fares the child of heaven who will not entertain
On earth the stranger's grief, the exile's sense of pain.

Mark how then still has run, enwoven from above,
Through thy life's darkest woof the golden thread of love.

To see the face of God, this makes the joy of heaven ;
The purer then the eye, the more joy will be given.

TRENCH.

FEBRUARY 23.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and abundant weight of glory.—
1 CORINTHIANS v. 17.

I do not expect in this world to be delivered from a heavy weight of sorrow. We are called into a union and participation with Him who was a man of sorrows, and who, though a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Beloved friend, faint not, neither be weary; take up your cross and follow Him unto the same place whither He has gone before. As He puts the cup of sorrow into our hand, He says, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" And shall we refuse or hold back from this fellowship with Jesus, in the sorrow which kills sin when it is received in the spirit of Jesus, in the filial spirit. Sorrow is not merely a difficulty which we are to endeavour to pass through as easily and as quickly as we can; it is the thing which works out the eternal weight of glory, not at all in the way of a price paid for it, but as the wise education and medicine of God. We are like the Israelites travelling through that dreary wilderness, until our carcasses, our fleshly thoughts and desires, fall in the desert.—T. ERSKINE.

*ST. MATTHIAS'S DAY.***FEBRUARY 24.**

They gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias.

Acts i. 26.

It is a comfort which every religious mind knows when any emergency of our life seems imminent, that there is One who controls us in all things which affect us; that, as it is true that without His cognizance not a sparrow falls to the ground, so all the little incidents that have given its bias to our life past—all the relations into which we have been thrown, all the influences which have been brought to bear upon us, all the helps we have had in rising to positions of usefulness, and all the checks, too, which have at times thwarted our cherished desires—have been subject to His absolute controlling will; that, as a loving Father, He has tended us from our earliest childhood. . . . Our life may have seemed to flow on at random, acquaintances may seem to have been formed by chance which have given a turn and complexion to our whole life; but Christians know that they are not subjected to chance, that they are dealt with even in the minutest matters by the Lord who loves their souls.—TAIT.

FEBRUARY 25.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 14.

Look not to the right hand or to the left, but look right forward; for the things on the right hand and on the left are idols; they are the hopes which, being uncertain, make the heart sick; but Christ is the true God; He is the assured hope that is not deferred, therefore He is the tree of life. Every hour brings His glorious kingdom of righteousness nearer. Look at His coming. "He will come, and will not tarry." He is our portion and our King now, even now; and although you may have been taught to sell all and buy Him, yet who hath known His preciousness? Every thought within us reproving unbelief and calling to holy and blessed confidence and fellowship with God is the word of the living God—the Christ of God speaking in us. May the Lord give you to realize much of His love and Spirit within you; and may He teach a blessed dependence for every thought and every feeling, yea, every breath, so that you may ever rest on the bosom of Jesus, waiting for His glorious appearing.

—T. ERSKINE.

FEBRUARY 26.

The crown of the wise is their wisdom.—PROVERBS xiv. 24.

Beware of a counsellor, and know before what need he hath; for he will counsel thee for himself. Consult not with one that suspecteth thee; and hide thy counsel from such as envy thee: neither consult with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous; neither with a coward in matters of war; nor with a merchant concerning exchange; nor with a buyer of selling; nor with an envious man of thankfulness; nor with an unmerciful man touching kindness; nor with the slothful for any work; nor with the hireling of a year for finishing work; nor with an idle servant of much business; hearken not unto these in any matter of counsel. But be continually with a godly man, whom thou knowest to keep the commandments of the Lord, whose mind is according to thy mind, and will sorrow with thee if thou shalt miscarry. And let the counsel of thine own heart stand; for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it. For a man's mind is sometime wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in a high tower. And, above all this, pray to the Most High that He will direct thy way in truth.—ECCLESIASTICUS.

FEBRUARY 27.

Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it resteth in Thee.—ST. AUGUSTINE.

Once give yourself to God, and without doing much, whatsoever you do will be well done. You will be fearless as to the future, desiring His will only; give yourself to the present fulfilling of His will, and do not seek beyond the good and evil of this present time. This daily fulfilling of God's will is at once the coming of His kingdom within, and our daily bread. It would be mere faithlessness and heathen mistrust to seek to penetrate into a future which God hides from us; leave it to Him; He will make it bitter or sweet, short or long; let Him do as seemeth good in His sight. Let the future be what it may, no preparation is so perfect as dying to our own will, and living to God. Our vexations cannot forward God's work, nor can we approach nearer to the God of peace by destroying our inward peace. "Martha, Martha! why art thou troubled about so many things?" But one thing is needful; to love Him and remain patiently at His feet.—FENELON.

FEBRUARY 28.

Be ye angry, and sin not.—EPHESIANS iv. 26.

Anger is one of the sinews of the soul: he that wants it hath a maimed mind. This anger is either heavenly, when one is offended for God; or hellish, when offended with God, or goodness. Be not angry for any without a cause; neither be mortally angry with any for a venial sin. He will make a strange combustion in the state of his soul who at the landing of every cock-boat sets the beacons on fire. To be angry for every toy debases the worth of thy anger; for he who will be angry for anything will be angry for nothing. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Let us take the Apostle's meaning rather than his words—with all possible speed to depose our passion. He that keeps anger long in his bosom giveth place to the devil. And why should we make room for him who will crowd in too fast for himself? Heat of passion makes our souls to crack, and the devil creeps in at the crannies.—FULLER.

MARCH 1.

Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening.

PSALM civ. 23.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the Night

Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
Not sumptuously adorned, not needing aid,
Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems!
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee: save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come, then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And, whether I devote thy gentler hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to please,
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

COWPER.

MARCH 2.

Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

COWPER.

We must all know, if we pause and think, that no outer thing did ever truly and sufficiently satisfy our needs; that we have never yet known any worldly joy which we should be content to keep without change or addition as our portion for eternity. That is, none ever did satisfy us, and none ever can. For we have capacities and powers to which they cannot reach; we are too great to be

satisfied with these little things; and so we see mere men of the world, even with everything life can give, secretly unhappy, unsatisfied, restless, and this more and more as life goes on. For the world's first portion is her best; her first cup is the sweetest, and it is soon drunk to the very dregs. They are that of which the caged eagle is the symbol—weary of the very mightiness of its wings, and dashing them fruitlessly against the bars which shut it in. They have shut up themselves in these mere outward things; and because they would not soar to God, their strength becomes their torment.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

MARCH 3.

Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then I would flee away,
and be at rest.—PSALM lv. 6.

What can be more separated by leagues and æons of outward circumstances and inward sentiments than is the life of the hermit's from our own? What more unlike their loneliness than the dashing waves of this sea of men? What more removed from their calm than the feverish throbbing of the world's great beating heart? What more unlike their utter indifference to temporal interests and earthly cares than all that we see and hear of around us? What have we, who have our part in such life in this, what have we in common with the "sainted eremites"? Was not their life with its

errors, no less than with its noblenesses, the dream of a bygone age; an ideal which we condemn as mistaken; a torch which has long since smouldered out? But let me only remind you that one of the noblest characters in the Old Testament, as well as one of the noblest in the New, was nothing more nor less than a hermit; in the Old, Elijah, the rough, wild, half-Arab prophet who shattered the monstrous idols of Jezebel; in the New, John the Baptist, over whom the lips of his Saviour pronounced the unequalled eulogy, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." We cannot imitate the outer life of the hermits; it is not necessary or desirable that we should; but we can learn their strong horror of sin; their noble struggle for righteousness; their entire simplicity of character; their utter aloofness from the mean and greedy scramble of the world; the sincerity with which they cultivated the duty of mutual forbearance, and their intense conviction that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.—FARRAR.

MARCH 4.

They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane,
They bowed their necks, the death to feel;
Who follows in their train?

It was by faith that Ignatius faced the lions; by faith that Polycarp stood unflinching in the flame; by faith Antony lived his twenty years in his moun-

tain cell ; by faith Benedict rolled his naked body among the thorns to subdue the lusts of the flesh ; by faith Fra Angelico despised the honours of the world ; by faith Francis reproduced on the Umbrian hills the life of Christ ; by faith St. Columban faced the fierce tyranny of Burgundean kings ; by faith St. Boniface hewed down the idol oak. . . . And even so, by faith, God helping us, *we* too, may learn from the martyrs that better is fearful death than shamed life ; from the hermits, that the life is more than meat ; from the monks, the sacredness of poverty, chastity, and obedience ; from the early Franciscans, contempt of gold ; from the missionaries, devotion to God's other sheep which are not of this flock. All these died in the faith, having received the promises, in part on earth, and seen them afar off in heaven. Let us with them follow our common Lord. All these lessons have come down as an heritage to age after age of mission workers. . . . The day for missions is not past, nor ever will be till the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.—FARRAR.

MARCH 5.

Riches and honour are with me ; yea, durable riches and righteousness.—PROVERBS viii. 18.

While the praises of this heavenly wisdom are painted in such fair colours—while its worth is set far above rubies and crystal, the gold of Ophir and the topaz of Ethiopia, it is both in the Proverbs and

other parts of Scripture united constantly with knowledge. Solomon said unto God, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge," and God said unto Solomon, "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee." They are not mere synonyms. Knowledge may come when wisdom lingers; and, on the other hand, wisdom may exist in rich and divine abundance when knowledge is scanty and superficial. And it is clear that in Scripture, wisdom is the loftier and more sacred of the two. . . . Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. But what is wisdom? In that most magnificent outburst of Semitic poetry, the twenty-second chapter of Job, after pointing out that there is such a thing as a high and noble natural knowledge, the Patriarch asks, "But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" and after showing with marvellous power that it is beyond man's unaided search—that the depths and the sea say, "It is not in me," and Destruction and Death have but heard the name thereof with their ears,—then he adds, as with one great thunder-crash of concluding music, "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof." And unto man He said, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."—FARRAR.

MARCH 6.

When Israel was yet a child God loved him, and out of Egypt He called His son.—HOSEA xi. 1.

In the Old Testament we see that son grow up to life. Many were the sins, the follies, the apostasies of his life. Can you point me to one folly which was not visited with its natural consequences; to one pleasant vice which did not become its own punishment; to one sin which was not lashed with its own appropriate scourge? Then came the ruinous and crushing humiliation of the Babylonish captivity. A remnant, which they themselves compared but to the chaff of the wheat, returned; and of the old temptation, the temptation to a sensual idolatry, they were cured for ever. But they were not saved from other sins. Keeping the form of their religion, they lost its spirit; from a living truth they suffered it to degenerate into a meaningless ritual, into a dead formula, into a hypocritical sham. They had for centuries been hoping, dreaming, talking of a Messiah, and their Messiah came; and how did they receive Him? They received Him with yells of "Crucify!" And then, in Scripture, at the Cross which consummated their iniquity, the story of their nation ends. But history, which proves the responsibility of nations,—history adds its chapter to the Sacred Book. It shows how soon the wings of every vulture flapped heavily over the corpse of a nation that had fallen into moral death. Some of those who had shared

in that scene, and myriads of their children, shared also in the long horror of that siege, which, for its unutterable fearfulness, stands unparalleled in the story of mankind.—FARRAR.

MARCH 7.

Shall we be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

This, then, was one good thing the martyrs did for the world—they changed the Cross of Christ from an emblem of horror and infamy to the proudest of all symbols, to be woven in gold on the banners of armies, and set in gems on the crowns of kings. And another grand thing they did was to set the loftiest of all examples; to bear witness to the most necessary of all truths—that there is, in life, something better than ease and comfort, more delightful than pleasure, more “golden than gold,” that the “life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.” Such men, as has well been said, “create an epidemic of nobleness.” Men become better and greater from gazing at their example, more ready to do and dare; more willing to lift their eyes out of the mire of selfishness, and the dust of anxiety and toil; more brave to try whether they, too, cannot “scale the toppling crags of duty,” and hold converse with those their loftier brethren upon the

“Shining tablelands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.”

Through the darknesses and disappointments of life, amid the wars and miseries of history, these high examples glide ever before us like a pillar of fire. And thus their power of example by death becomes a power of influence in life.—FARRAR.

MARCH 2.

And I, John, saw the holy city.—REVELATION xxi. 2.

Sweet place, sweet place alone
The court of God most high;
The heaven of heaven's throne
Of spotless majesty.

Earth's but a sorry tent,
Pitch'd for a few frail days,
A short-leased tenement;
Heaven's still my song, my praise.

No tears from any eyes
Drop in that holy quire;
But Death itself there dies,
And sighs themselves expire.

There shall temptations cease,
My frailties there should end;
There should I rest in peace,
In the arms of my best Friend.

Jerusalem on high
My song and city is,
My home whene'er I die,
The centre of my bliss.

MARCH 9.

Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take.

The angels of time and opportunity are with us now, and now we may unclench from their conquered hands garlands of immortal flowers. Yet with beating wing and soundless footfall they are ever bearing us onward—bearing us through a dark river, and to an unknown land. We stand with our feet in the wave, and noiselessly the river of life broadens, deepens, lengthens, rises silently to our ankles, to our knees, to our necks, flows over our heads, and hurries more and more, while we regard it not, its rapid waters eager to sweep us on to the great eternal deeps. Oh, reverence and use aright the hours which as they perish are imputed to you. Regard each new day as a fresh unstained gift from God, and wrestling with it earnestly from its earliest dawn, say to it, “I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.” Hallow it, while it is yet unstained and innocent, in your morning prayer; for prayer, too, is an angel—an angel whose wing is strong as an eagle’s; an angel “who moves the arms of Him who moves the world;” an angel who can turn sinners into penitents, and penitents into saints. Be prayerful, and you will be happy and innocent, and noble too.—FARRAR.

MARCH 10.

Jesus stood by the lake of Gennesareth.—**LUKE v. 1.**

The lake of Gennesareth, with its glittering crystal and fringe of flowering oleanders, lies, still unchanged, in the bosom of the hills, reflecting every varying gleam of the atmosphere like an opal set in emeralds. The waters are still as beautiful in their clearness as when the boat of Peter lay rocking on their ripples, and Jesus gazed into their crystal depths; the cup-like basin still seems to overflow with its flood of sunlight; the air is still balmy with natural perfumes; the turtle dove still murmurs in the valleys, and the pelican fishes in the waves; and there are palms and green fields, and streams, and grey heaps of ruins. And what it has lost in population and activity it has gained in solemnity and interest. If every vestige of human habitation should disappear from beside it, and the jackal and the hyena should howl about the shattered fragments of the synagogues where once Christ taught, yet the fact that He chose it as the scene of His opening ministry will give a sense of sacredness and pathos to its lonely waters till time shall be no more.—**FARRAR.**

MARCH 11.

Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.—LUKE xii. 13.

Almost stern was the Lord's rebuke to the man's egregious self-absorption. He seems to have been one of those not uncommon characters to whom the whole universe is pervaded by self, and he seems to have considered that the main object of the Messiah's coming would be to secure for him a share of his inheritance, and to overrule this unmanageable brother. Jesus at once dispelled his miserably carnal expectations, and then warned him, and all who heard, to be beware of letting the narrow horizon of earthly comforts span their hopes. How brief, yet how rich in significance, is that little parable which He told them, of the rich fool who, in his greedy, God-forgetting, presumptuous selfishness, would do this and that, and who, as though there were no such thing as death, and as though the soul could live by bread, thought that "my fruits," and "my goods," and "my barns," and "to eat and drink and be merry," could for many years to come sustain what was left him of a soul, but to whom from heaven pealed, as a terrible echo to his words, the heart-thrilling sentence of awful irony, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."—FARRAR.

MARCH 12.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.—JOHN xvi. 33.

Christ came not to revolutionize, but to ennoble, and to sanctify. He came to reveal that the eternal was not the *Future*, but only the *unseen*; that eternity was no ocean whither men were being swept by the river of time, but was around them now; and their lives were only real in so far as they felt its reality and its presence. He came to teach that God was no dim abstraction, infinitely separated from them in the far-off blue, but that He was the Father in which they lived and moved and had their being; and that the service which He loved was not ritual and sacrifice, not pompous scrupulosity and censorious orthodoxy, but mercy and justice, humility and love. He came not to hush the natural music of men's lives, nor to fill it with storm and agitation, but to retune every silver chord "in that harp of a thousand strings," and to make it echo with the harmonies of heaven.—FARRAR.

MARCH 13.

But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.—PHILIPPIANS ii. 7.

In all ages there has been an exaggerated desire for wealth; an exaggerated admiration for those who possess it; an exaggerated belief in its influence in producing or increasing the happiness of life;

and from these errors a flood of cares and jealousies and meannesses have desolated the life of man. And therefore Jesus chose voluntarily "the low estate of the poor,"—not, indeed, an absorbing, degrading, grinding poverty, which is always rare, and almost always remediable, but that commonest lot of honest poverty which, though it necessitates self-denial, can provide with ease for all the necessities of a simple life. "Is not this the *carpenter*," occurs in Mark vi. 3. We may, indeed, be thankful that this word remains, for it is full of meaning, and has exercised a very noble and blessed influence over the fortunes of mankind, and has tended to console and sanctify the estate of poverty, to ennoble the duty of labour. Our Lord wished to show that labour is a pure and a noble thing; it is the salt of life; it is the girdle of manliness; it saves the body from effeminate languor, and the soul from polluting thoughts. Christ laboured, working with His own hands.—FARRAR.

MARCH 14.

And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's.—GENESIS xxxvii. 36.

How grand a display is there, in the life of Joseph, of the power of a living inward sense of God's perpetual presence in ennobling the soul of man! For what condition could be more open to temptation than that of this Hebrew lad, in the absolute loneliness of his first Egyptian life? Home

associations, the voice of love, the watching eye of tender care, the acting up to an already established character—what helps are these! And these seemed to be gone from him altogether. How noble to be the same without them; to have no lowering of the standard from the loss of all outward safeguards, no sapping of the foundations of moral responsibility from his loss, as a stranger, a foreigner, and a slave, of the elevating sense of personality, and the preserving love of character! How grand still to have, like some lustrous diamond gleaming inwardly on his lonely spirit, the talisman of the one thought, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” This thought was strong enough so to quicken his conscience, that it still connected indissolubly this broken, disconnected present with that old past of his younger life; and whilst he moved amidst the new temptations of the house of the Egyptian, he still lived, in thought and love and faith, in the old tent at Hebron, and saw the fond face of his aged father, and bowed with him anew before the God of Israel.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

MARCH 15.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?
ISAIAH lv. 2.

False glozing pleasures, casks of happiness,
Foolish night-fires, women and children's wishes,
Chases in Arras, gilded emptiness,
Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
Embroider'd lyes, nothing between two dishes;
These are the pleasures here.

True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown ;
Sure-footed griefs, solid calamities,
Plain demonstrations, evident and clear,
Fetching their proof even from the very bone ;
These are the sorrows here.

But oh the folly of distracted men
Who griefs in earnest, joys in jest persue,
Preferring, like brute beasts, a loathsome den
Before a court, e'en that above so clear,
Where are no sorrows, but delights more true
Than miseries are here.

HERBERT.

MARCH 16.

Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

ECCLESIASTES ii. 13.

Memory is the treasure of the mind wherein the monuments thereof are kept and preserved. Brute creatures equal, if not exceed, men in a rare retentive memory. Through how many labyrinths of woods, without other clue or threads than natural instinct doth the hunted hare return to her muse ! How doth the little bee, flying into several meadows and gardens, sipping off many cups, yet never intoxicated, through an ocean of air steadily steer herself home without help, or card, or compass. But these cannot play an after game, and recover what they have forgotten, which is done by the mediation of discourse. First soundly infix in thy mind what thou desirest to remember. What wonder is it if agitation of business jog that out of thy head which

was there rather tacked than fastened? Over-burthen not thy memory to make so faithful a servant a slave. Memory, like a purse, if it be over-full that it cannot shut, all will drop out of it. Marshal thy notions into a handsome method. One will carry twice more weight trussed and packed up in bundles than when it lies untowardly flapping and hanging about his shoulders. Things orderly parcelled up under heads are most portable.—FULLER.

MARCH 17.

And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.—LUKE ii. 51.

Almost in the centre of the chain of hills which form the northern limit of the plain of Jezreel, there is a singular cleft in the limestone, forming the entrance to a little valley. The basin of the valley is divided by hedges of cactus into little fields and gardens, which, about the fall of the spring rains, wear an aspect of indescribable calm, and glow with a tint of the richest green. Gradually the valley opens into a little natural amphitheatre of hills; and there, clinging to the hollow of the hills, lie the flat roofs and narrow streets of a little Eastern town; and that little town is Nazareth, where the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, spent nearly thirty years of His mortal life. It was, in fact, His home, His native village for all but three or four years of His life on earth, the village which lent its then ignominious name to the

scornful title written upon His cross ; the village from which He did not disdain to draw His appellation when He spake in vision to the persecuting Saul. And along the narrow mountain path His feet must have often trod, for it is the only approach by which in returning northward from Jerusalem He could have reached the home of His infancy, youth, and manhood.—FARRAR.

MARCH 18.

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
PHILIPPIANS iv. 11.

Most true it is that whosoever would have this jewel of contentment which turns all into gold, yea, want into wealth, must come with minds divested of all ambitious and covetous thoughts, else are they never likely to attain it. It is not a senseless stupidity respecting what becomes of our outward estate. God would have us to take notice of all accidents which, from Him, happen to us in all worldly matters. Had the martyrs had the dead palsy before they went to the stake to be burnt, their sufferings had not been so glorious. It is a humble and willing submitting ourselves to God's pleasure in all conditions. Thus contentment makes men carry themselves gracefully in wealth, want, health, sickness, freedom, fetters, yea, whatever condition soever God allots them. It is no breach of contentment in men, by lawful means, to seek the bettering of their estate. A lazy hand is no argu-

ment of a contented mind ; indeed, he that is idle "shall have poverty enough." God's Spirit is the best school-master to teach contentment ; and the school of sanctified afflictions is the best place to learn contentment in.—FULLER.

MARCH 19.

Blessed be ye poor : for yours is the kingdom of God.

LUKE vi. 20.

The world hardly attaches any significance to any life except those of its heroes and benefactors, its mighty intellects, or its splendid conquerors. But these are, and must ever be, the few. One raindrop of myriads falling on moor or desert or mountain, one snowflake out of myriads melting into the immeasurable sea, is, and must be, for most men the symbol of their ordinary lives. They die, and barely have they died when they are forgotten ; a few years pass, and the creeping lichens eat away the letters of their names upon the churchyard stone. . . . But Christ came to teach us that continued excitement, prominent action, distinguished service, brilliant success, are no essential elements of true and noble life, and that myriads of the beloved of God are to be found among the insignificant and the obscure. The calmest and most unknown lot is often the happiest, and we may safely infer that those years in the home and trade of the Carpenter of Nazareth were happy years in our Saviour's life.—FARRAR.

MARCH 20.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.—LUKE xix. 41.

The Jerusalem of that day, as Jesus saw it under the burning flood of vernal sunshine, wrapped in its imperial mantle of proud towers,—the Jerusalem whose massive ramparts and lordly palaces made it a wonder of the world,—was a spectacle incomparably more magnificent than the decayed and crumbling city of to-day. And as Jesus gazed, a rush of divine sorrow and compassion welled up from His inmost heart. He had dropped silent tears at the grave of Lazarus; here, over fallen Jerusalem He wept aloud; for He was gazing with the eagle eye of prophecy on a scene far different from that which met His actual gaze. What He saw was, not a fair and holy city, sitting, like a lady of kingdoms, upon her virgin heights, but a city cowering, abject, degraded, desolate. To Him the beautiful city has become a harlot; her gold has become dross; her wine mixed with water; and now her hour had come. In the Jerusalem that was, He saw, down the dim vista of fifty years, the Jerusalem that was to be—the desecrated Jerusalem of the days of Titus. He saw those lordly towers shattered; those umbrageous trees hewn down; that golden sanctuary polluted. In the flush of the existing prosperity He foresaw the horrors of the coming retribution. The eye of His troubled imagination beheld the 600,000 corpses carried out of

those city gates; the wretched fugitives crucified by myriads around those walls; the devouring flames doing their purging, seething, avenging work; and what had been Jerusalem, the holy, the noble, was but a heap of ghastly ruins, where the smouldering embers were half slaked in the rivers of a guilty nation's blood.—FARRAR.

MARCH 31.

And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.—LUKE ii. 42.

It must have been a wonderful sight to the child Jesus to visit the holy city at the season of the Passover. The multitudes who flocked to the feast from all sides were countless. Josephus reckoned the numbers attending a single Passover as 2,700,000, inclusive of the population of the city. Every house in the narrow limits of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims, and the whole landscape round covered with the tents or booths of mat and wicker work and interwoven leaves, extemporized to serve as shelter—like the similar structures of the Eastern pilgrims still—for those who could not be accommodated in any house. The routes by which they travelled to the holy city must have been like those to Mecca, at certain seasons, even now; countless vessels laden with living freights of pilgrims; all the main lines of road thronged with huge caravans; every port of the Mediterranean, and every city and town on the highways leading to the great centre,

thronged as with the passage of armies. The vast "dispersion,"—Jewish by birth, sentiment, or adoption—converged more and more densely on the one point, Jerusalem. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and in the costume of the far East, with their long trains of camels and mules, crowds from every province or Lesser Asia, Cappadocia, Pontus, etc., each band with the distinctive characteristics of their own district. Men from the slopes of Cretan Ida, and from the far-off cities and towns of sandy Arabia, met under the shadow of the temple; the whole world, in a sense, was gathered to this one spot.—**GEIKIE.**

MARCH 23.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.—**JAMES iv. 14.**

Time's a handbreadth; 'tis a tale;
'Tis a vessel under sail;
'Tis an eagle in its way,
Darting down upon its prey;
'Tis an arrow in its flight,
Mocking the pursuing sight;
'Tis a short-lived, fading flower;
'Tis a rainbow on a shower;
'Tis a momentary ray
Smiling in a winter's day;
'Tis a torrent's rapid stream;
'Tis a shadow; 'tis a dream;
'Tis the closing watch of night,
Dying at the rising light;
'Tis a bubble; 'tis a sigh.
Be prepared, O man, to die.

QUARLES.

MARCH 23.

A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil olive, and honey.—**DEUT. viii. 8.**

Intended to carry the truth to all nations, it was essential that the Bible should have a cosmopolitan attractiveness ; and within the narrow limits of that strip of coast, as we might call Palestine, are gathered the features of countries most widely apart. The peaks of Lebanon are never without patches of snow, even in the heat of summer. Snow falls nearly every winter along the summits of the central ridge of Palestine. . . . On the other hand, in the valley of the Jordan, summer brings the heat of the tropics ; and the different seasons, in different parts, according to the elevation, exhibit a regular gradation between these extremes. Thus, within the extent of a single landscape, there is every climate, from the cold of Northern Europe to the heat of India. The traveller from the more northerly temperate land finds himself in some parts surrounded by the trees and vegetation of his own country. The traveller from more southern countries is no less at home. . . . There can be no more vivid illustration of the climate of any land than the vegetation it yields ; and Palestine, tried by this test, reproduces climates and zones which, in other countries, are separated by many hundreds of miles. A book written in such a land must necessarily be a reflection, in its imagery and modes of thought, of

much that is common to men all over the earth. The Scriptures of the two Testaments have had this priceless help in their great mission, from Palestine having been chosen by God as the land in which they were written.—GEIKIE.

MARCH 24.

Whate'er Thy sacred will ordains,
Oh give me strength to bear ;
And let me know my Father reigns,
And trust His tender care.

The great end of prayer is spiritual good ; temporal benefits are hardly worth pressing. To have them does not necessarily bring happiness, and they change with the day. Apart from the certainty that we must often ask unwisely, and, often, what cannot be granted, our life here is so passing that its interests must needs be subordinate. Besides, to be always craving material favours is apt to foster mean thoughts, and make us selfish and mercenary in our relations to God. Nor are they in themselves much worth. If we had everything we could wish in the world, we might still be wretched enough. True wealth and prosperity is that of the soul, not of circumstances. It is well to ask what we think we need, humbly, and in submission to higher wisdom, but only in its right place, and not too urgently. The far noblest good to ask is that we be brought nearer in spirit to the divine, by loving and humble acquiescence and oneness with God's will, whatever

it orders. To be stayed on God would be perfect peace; freed from all anxious fretting; no more worn and burdened with endless care, but committing all to Infinite Power, and Light, and Love.—GEIKIE.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

MARCH 25.

Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou among women.—LUKE i. 22.

What day in all the year
Should bring the upper world so near,
As this—which glorifies the Love
That left Its majesty above,
And stoop'd to be, as on this day,
The tenant of 'a house of clay'?

He, who was rich, becoming poor,
To give us riches that endure;
He, who was high, becoming low,
That we might to His stature grow;
He, who was God, becoming man,
To save us by His wondrous plan.

O Saviour! Thou this day didst take
A human body for our sake;
To share with us the griefs of life,
Its watchings, weariness, and strife:
All that belongs to man, but sin,
Thou didst this day Thyself begin.

MONSELL.

MARCH 26.

Ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest.—LEVITICUS xxiii. 10.

It was to the valley of Kedron the pilgrims came down at the Feast of Tabernacles, to cut the long boughs of willow which they carried in procession to the temple, and laid bending over the altar. On the eve of the first day of the feast, Jesus would see men sent by the temple authorities, a great crowd following, to cut the sheaf of firstfruits. Perhaps He saw the three reapers, with basket and sickle, step to spots previously marked out, asking, as they stood beside the new barley, "Has the sun set yet?" "Is this the right sickle?" "Is this the right basket?" To be followed by another question, thrice repeated, "Shall I cut?" which was answered, with what seems, now, childish formality, but then thrilled all hearts, "Cut!" The Child from Nazareth would follow, when the sheaf, thus reaped, was carried amidst great rejoicings, to the fore court of the temple, and presented by the priest as a peace offering; then threshed, winnowed, and cleansed, dried over a sacred fire, and forthwith ground into flour, the finest of which was the new harvest "meat offering" before God. He knew that till this had been presented at the altar, no field could be cut, except to get fodder for cattle, or for other necessary ends. . . . City and people, the past and the present, must have filled the whole

being of the Child with awe and wonder, for He now stood, for the first time, under the shadow of His Father's temple, and the murmur of countless languages that filled the air was, in very truth, homage to that Father from all the world.—GEIKIE.

MARCH 27.

Bless me, even me also, O my Father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.—GENESIS xxvii. 38.

The reverence of children towards their parents was carried to the sublime in Hebrew families. The child found the ideal of his obedience in Isaac's willingly yielding himself to death at his father's command. Every Hebrew child heard from its earliest years how the finger of God Himself had written upon the table of stone, "Honour thy father and thy mother," etc. Disobedience to father or mother was made a public crime, which the community might punish with death. Unworthy children were laid under the most awful threatenings of divine displeasure. The child read how Joseph, "when he met his father, fell on his neck, and wept a good while," and bowed himself to the earth before him; and how their great lawgiver "did obeisance to his father-in-law, and kissed him." The tender care of an aged parent was regarded by every Jew as a sacred duty. The son of Sirach only repeated the sentiment of all Scripture when he said, "Honour thy father with thy whole heart, and forget not the sorrows of thy mother. Remember

that thou wast begotten of them, and how canst thou recompense them the things that they have done for thee?" That a father's and a mother's blessing was prized as sacred, and its being withheld regarded as the saddest loss, shows how deeply such teachings had sunk into the Jewish mind. Family life, resting thus on the holiest duty and reverence, has been nowhere in any age more beautiful than it was, and still is, amongst the Jews.—GEIKIE.

MARCH 28.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.—JOHN xii. 32.

It is an additional peculiarity of the Holy Land, in relation to the history of religion, that its physical features and its position together brought it, from its earliest ages, in contact with the widest range of peoples and empires. Egypt and it are two oases in widespreading deserts, and, as such, attracted race after race. . . . In all these inroads of new nationalities, the Holy Land, as the highway to Egypt, necessarily shared; and hence, as centuries passed, race after race was brought into contact with the Jew, in spite of his isolation, and the Jew into contact with them. It leavened widely distant nations, more or less, with the grand religious truths which had been committed to the keeping of the Jews alone. It led or forced him abroad to distant regions, to learn, as well as to communicate. That was a fitting scene, moreover, for the advent of the

Saviour of the world, in which, small though its bounds, He was surrounded not by the Jew alone, but by a population representing a wide proportion of the tribes and nations of the then known earth. The inscription on the cross, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, was the symbol of the relation of Christ's life, and of His death, to all humanity.—GEIKIE.

MARCH 29.

He made the stars also.—GENESIS i. 16.

Tell me, ye shining hosts,
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
Favoured as ours; transgressors from the womb,
And, hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who, long detained on foreign shores,
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks,
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend.

COWPER.

MARCH 30.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.

PROVERBS iv. 7.

The higher the objects that engage our minds and hearts, the higher their tone and the greater the honour. We rise or sink, as we fix our regards worthily or the reverse. Our affections are the mirror of our nature. Degraded, they reflect our degradation; pure and refined, they reflect their own nobleness. And what we admire and choose, we, even insensibly, imitate—sinking progressively towards a low standard, or rising towards a lofty. Our likings mark our moral affinities and develop them. We respect ourselves and are respected, as we look above or below our own level in worth and intellect. Intercourse with goodness or genius both honours and raises us. Even mere outward dignity sheds a light on those in its circle. We are the more in honour the nearer the king; and if with dignity there be illustrious worth, intimacy is a certificate not only of rank, but of character. What, then, shall I say of religion? It looks to the Highest, the All-wise, and All-good, the Eternal Light that knows no shadow. If character be fixed by the standard we choose, what model is there like the All-perfect? The divine character is the only unclouded perfection; the uncreated glory, of which all that is good and fair in the universe is but the reflected light.—GEIKIE.

MARCH 31.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—**HEBREWS xi. 10.**

Heaven is a city never built with hands, nor hoary with the years of time—a city whose inhabitants no census has numbered—a city through whose streets rush no tides of business, nor nodding hearse creeps slowly with its burthen to the tomb—a city without griefs or graves, without sins or sorrows, without births or burials, without marriages or mournings—a city which glories in having Jesus for its King, angels for its guards, saints for its citizens; whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise.—**GUTHRIE.**

APRIL 1.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. —
2 PETER iii. 13.

I praised the earth, in beauty seen
With garlands gay of various green;
I praised the sea, whose ample field
Shone glorious as a silver shield;
And earth and ocean seemed to say,
“Our beauty is but for a day.”
I praised the sun, whose chariot roll’d
On wheels of amber and of gold;
I praised the moon, whose softer eye
Gleam’d sweetly through the summer sky;
And moon and sun in answer said,
“Our days of light are numbered.”

O God! O Good beyond compare!
If thus Thy meaner works are fair;
If thus Thy bounties gild the span
Of ruin'd earth and sinful man,—
How glorious must the mansion be
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee!

HEBR.

APRIL 2.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that the Saviour died for me,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Let our studies turn more and more on that which is the core and centre of the Bible. The Bible is a revelation of God; and the core and centre of God's revelation is Christ crucified. Many other subjects are treated in the Bible besides this; but this is really the pith and marrow of it all; this wraps up in itself the whole compass of edification. In the book of the Revelation we read of "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and the (very) leaves of which were for the healing of the nations." It is the passion tree or cross of the Lord Jesus, which, planted by faith in the hearts of His followers, brings forth there all the fruits of the Spirit, and even the leaves of which—every slight circumstance of it—are medicinal to the soul. Study, then, the passion of Christ, in all its details—the apprehension, the binding, the buffeting, the spitting, the scourging, the mockery, the gall, the nails, the crown of thorns, the burning thirst, and the precious death which crowns the whole. Study

it with fervent prayer and longing desire, rather than prying curiosity. Study it side by side with thy sins, which made such a sacrifice necessary. So, under the influence of the Spirit of grace and supplications, shalt thou mourn for Him whom thou hast pierced, and this tenderness of spirit thou shalt find to be the principle of growth in grace—the greatest of all motive powers in the spiritual life.—GOULBURN.

APRIL 3.

And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day.—DANIEL vi. 10.

To the Jews of every land, the temple was the crown and glory of their religious system. In their scattered synagogues and houses of prayer, they looked towards it at every service. Their gifts and offerings flowed to it in a golden stream—partly to satisfy the requirements of the law, but even more to gratify their religious devotion. Constant voluntary gifts, often of great value, streamed into the holy treasury. Tithes, also, were claimed by the Rabbis from all Jews abroad, as well as at home. "In almost every town," says Philo, "there is a chest for the sacred money, and into this the dues are put. At fixed times it is entrusted to the foremost men to carry to Jerusalem. The noblest are chosen from every town to take up the hope of all the Jews, untouched—for on this payment of legal dues rests the hope of the devout." Thus Jerusalem and the temple were the grand religious centre of

all Israel, to the remotest limits of its wanderings. The sanctuary lived in every heart. To maintain it inviolate was the one common anxiety. Foreign rulers might hold sway over Palestine, and even over Jerusalem, and so long as the temple was left untouched, submission was paid them as the will of fate. If, however, the haughtiness or greed of the enemy violated, or even only threatened, the sanctuary, there ran through the whole Jewish world a feeling of indignation that roused them at once, and at the cry that the temple was in danger, weapons were grasped, and solemn prayer rose, and one deep resolve pervaded all—to shed the last drop of their blood on the battle-field, or at the altar, for Jerusalem and the sanctuary.—GEIKIE.

APRIL 4.

For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.—PSALM cxxxix. 4.

Character grows for the most part insensibly, as the life grows at first. Now and then it gets notable impulses which we can mark, but commonly it grows imperceptibly, like our bodies. Single acts may show character, but they seldom form it, though some are supreme and ruling. It grows ring by ring, and the twig of this year becomes the bough of the next. There is no falsifying character rightly read; to the All-knowing the man and his act are substance and shadow. Character, like a well-cut jewel, shines whichever way we approach it. Life

without it is only a mask. What is called public opinion is the verdict of the world on it, and is courted and dreaded as their master, by kings and even by nations. Opinion, as Pascal well says, governs everything, and nothing more directly than personal character. To lose it is ostracism to a king as much as to a peasant. Honour without it is like the shout to Herod in his silver robes that he was a god, when he felt himself being eaten of worms. A good name is the best jewel in any crown; the pearl of great price, without which all others are a lie. In common life character is existence.—GEIKIE.

APRIL 5.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.—EPHESIANS v. 19.

We have said that good and holy sentiments are the oil which feeds the lamp of prayer. They are emphatically so. There are seasons known to every devout person, when the vessel of the heart seems to run 'dry, and the flame of prayer burns low in the socket. You may then replenish the vessel by reading the favourite spiritual author. Pass your eye once more over that marked passage—over those words which glow with such a fervour of devout sentiment, and the oil will flow again, drop by drop, into the vessel. Particularly may this be done with Christian poetry. Poetry is the voice of the affections, and, therefore, has a peculiar tendency to quicken the affections; the music of David's harp

chased away from Saul the evil spirit of moody sullenness. Elisha's minstrel, playing with his hand, laid such a spell upon the prophet's mind, that the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied. And the minstrelsy of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs has often brought the Christian out of a state of mind in which prayer seemed a labour and a drudgery, if not an impossibility, into that calm and holy frame in which he could again put forth spiritual energies, and has found himself able to renew his interrupted intercourse with God. Give the specific a trial, and you shall ere long know its virtue for yourself.—**GOULBURN.**

APRIL 6.

"Christian! seek not yet repose,"
Hear thy guardian angel say;
Thou art in the midst of foes;
"Watch and pray."

The age of man passes on, and real trials have to be grappled with when life is mounting to its noon-tide. Narrow circumstances, sickness, bereavement, the manifold snares of the great world, the lures of ambition, or sensuality, or covetousness beset the man on all sides. These great trials of faith and patience find themselves represented, in miniature, in the little crosses, ruggednesses, unpleasant collisions of one day's work. Temptations in the heat of conversation to overstate things, or to use acrimonious

language, or to throw out (for the sake of amusement) words bordering on the profane, temptations to lose one's temper, to indulge appetite in eating, to resign one's self to calls of ease and sloth ; all this is the miniature crucible, in which, day by day, the faith and patience of God's children are tried and approved. Often the noon-day sun waxes hot upon them. The bright promise of the morning is overclouded. There are fightings without and fears within, oppositions, vexations, annoyances, anxieties, apprehensions. It is painful to thwart natural inclinations, as a Christian must do several times in each day ; it is called in the Scripture, "crucifixion of the flesh ;" and crucifixion cannot but be painful. But comfort thee, faithful soul ! The night is coming when, if thou wilt endure patiently at present, the fever fit of passion, or anxiety, or excitement shall have worn off, and the Saviour shall fold thee under His wing, and thou shalt sit down under His shadow with great delight.—GOULBURN.

APRIL 7.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin.—MATTHEW vi. 28.

The Gospels show throughout that nothing escaped the eye of Jesus : the lilies and the grass of the field, as He paints them in the Sermon on the Mount ; the hen, as it gathers its young, in its mother's love, under its widespread wings ; the birds of the air, as they eat and drink without care, from the bounty

around them; the lambs, which run to follow the shepherd, but sometimes go astray, and are lost in the wilderness; the dogs, so familiar in Eastern cities; the foxes, that make their holes in the thickets; the silent plants and flowers; the humble life of the creatures in the woods: the air, the fold, and the streets were all alike noticed. Nor was man neglected: the sports of childhood; the rejoicings of riper life; the bride and the bridegroom; the mourner and the dead; the castles and palaces of princes, and the silken robes of the great; the rich owners of field and vineyard; the steward; the travelling merchant; the beggar; the debtor; the toil of the sower, and of the labourer in the vineyard; or of the fisher on the lake; the sweat of the worker; the sighs of those in chains or in the dungeons, were seen and heard and remembered. Nor did He rest merely in superficial observation: the possessions, joys, and sufferings of men; their words and acts, their customs, their pride or humility, their pretence or sincerity, their failings or merits, were treasured as materials from which, one day, to paint them to themselves . . . Nor was it mere intellectual penetration that laid bare the secrets of every heart. His search of the bosom is pervaded throughout with the breath of the warmest love. As the Brother of all, who has come to seek and to save that which was lost, He looks at men with eyes of infinite pity, whatever their race.—
GEIKIE.

APRIL 8.

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry,
and He shall say, Here I am.—ISAIAH lviii. 9.

Of what an easie quick access,
My blessed Lord, art Thou! How suddenly
May our requests Thine ear invade!
To shew that state dislikes not easinesse,
If I but lift mine eyes, my suit is made.
Thou canst no more not heare, than Thou canst dis.

Of what supreme almightie power
Is Thy great arm, which spans the east and west,
And takes the centre to the sphere!
By it do all things live their measur'd hour.
We cannot ask the thing which is not there,
Blaming the shallowness of our request.

Since, then, these three wait on Thy throne—
Ease, Power, and Love; I value prayer so,
That were I to leave all but one,
Wealth, fame, endowments, virtues, all should go;
I and dear prayer would together dwell,
And quickly gain for each inch lost, an ell.

HERBERT.

APRIL 9.

The fifteenth day of the seventh month shall be the feast of
tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.—LEVITICUS xxiii. 34.

The closing great feast of the year was that of the
Tabernacles, with its rejoicings—one of the three
great annual festivals at which every Israelite was
required, if possible, to make a journey to Jeru-
salem. It celebrated the forty years' wanderings
in tents, but it was also the great harvest thanks-

giving for the fruits of the year, now fully gathered. Like others, Jesus, doubtless, often lived for the week, at least by day, in booths of living twigs, which rose in every court, on every roof, and in the streets and open places of Jerusalem; and watched the crowds bearing offerings of the best of their fruit to the temple, each carrying a palm and citron branch as a sign of joy; the merry feasting in every house, the illuminated city, the universal joy were familiar to Him. The 25th of Chisleu—our December—commemorated the re-opening of the temple by Judas Maccabeus after its profanation by the Syrians. It brought another week of universal rejoicings. All through the land the people assembled in their synagogues, carrying branches of palm and other trees in their hands, and held jubilant services. No fast or mourning could commence during the feast; and a blaze of lamps, lanterns, and torches illuminated every house, within and without, each evening. In Jerusalem the temple itself was thus lighted up. The young of every household heard the stirring deeds of the Maccabees, to rouse them to noble emulation, and with these was linked the story of the heroic Judith and the Syrian Holofernes. There was no child in Nazareth that did not know them.—GEIKIE.

APRIL 10.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.—MARK xvi. 15.

When we turn to the teachings of Jesus, the claims of His life on our reverend study are still further strengthened. To Him we owe the expansion of whatever was vital in ancient Judaism to the creed of a tribe, into a religion for the world. The Old Testament reveals a sublime and touching description of God as the Creator, and the all-wise and almighty Ruler of all things; as the God, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind; the God of providence, on whom the eyes of all creatures wait, and who gives them their meat in due season; as a King of infinite majesty, who will by no means clear the guilty, but yet is merciful and gracious, etc.; and as pitying them that fear Him, like as a father pitieth his children. But it was reserved for Christ to bring the character of God, as a God of love, into full noon-day light, in His so loving the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life. In the New Testament, He is first called our Father in heaven—the Father of all mankind. The Old Testament proclaimed Him the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Portion of Israel. Christ points the eyes of all nations to Him as the God of the whole human race. The fundamental principles

of Christianity are as new and sublime as this grand conception of God, and spring directly from it.—
GEIKIE.

APRIL 11.

I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.—PSALM xlii. 4.

The temples and churches of all ages express a want instinctively and universally felt. It cannot be a mere weakness or superstition, or the effects of education and custom, which speak thus from every generation, but an impulse springing spontaneously from the depths of our being. We depend, on every side, on each other—like trailing flowers that grow by interlacing. Absolute isolation would soon be death. Society is the universal confession that we are incomplete apart. In our physical wants, and our intellectual, we lean on all around us; and it is the same with our higher. It helps us to pray with more fervour to join in public services; there is a mysterious power in them which stimulates conscience, intellect, and imagination; all, indeed, that helps us to realize the present, or rise to the future. Gratitude to God is deepened when a multitude joins us in expressing it, as no less due from them all. Humility and regret are felt most when the “amen” that confesses our shortcomings is repeated by a whole congregation. Dependence on heavenly mercy is realized doubly when all around join in the cry for it; and, lastly, the glorious majesty

of God rises more grandly to our thoughts when His praise goes up like the voice of many waters.
GEIKIE.

APRIL 12.

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.—EPHESIANS iv. 23.

If some people fancy that they must be grave and solemn at church, but may be silly and frantic at home; that they must live by some rule on the Sunday, but may spend other days by chance; that they must have some times of prayer, but may waste the rest of their time as they please; that they must give some of their money in charity, but may squander away the rest as they have a mind; such people have not enough considered the nature of religion, or the true reasons of piety. For he that upon principles of reason can tell why it is good to be wise and heavenly minded at church, can tell that it is always desirable to have the same tempers in all other places. He that truly knows why he should spend any time well, knows that it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly understands the reasonableness and excellency of charity, will know that it can never be excusable to waste any of our money in pride and folly, and in any needless expenses.—LAW.

APRIL 13.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?—HEBREWS i. 14.

That angels form part of our unseen world appears from the vision seen by the patriarch Jacob. We are told that when he fled from his brother Esau "he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night." How little did he think that there was anything very wonderful in this spot! It was a lone uncomfortable place: there was no house there, night was coming on, and he was to sleep upon the bare rock. Yet how different was the truth! He was but the world that is seen; yet the world that is not seen was there. It was there, though it did not at once make known its presence, but needed to be supernaturally displayed to him. He saw it in his sleep. "He dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached up to heaven, and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and behold, the Lord stood above it." This was the other world. Persons commonly speak as if the other world did not exist now, but would after death. No; it exists now, though we see it not. It is among us and around us. Jacob was shown this in his dream. Angels were all about him, though he knew it not. And again, what Jacob saw in his sleep Elisha's servant saw as with his eyes; and the shepherds at the time of the nativity not only saw, but heard.—J. H. NEWMAN.

APRIL 14.

In God's word will I rejoice, in the Lord's word will I comfort me.—PSALM lvi. 10.

He only who knows the number of the waves of the ocean, and the abundance of tears in the human eye; He who sees the sighs of the heart before they are uttered, and who hears them still when they are hushed into silence,—He alone can tell how many holy emotions, how many heavenly vibrations have been produced and will ever be produced in the souls of men by the reverberation of these mysterious strains of these predestinated hymns, read, meditated, sung, in every hour of day and night, in every winding of the vale of tears. The Psalter of David is like a mystic harp, hung on the walls of the true Zion. Under the breath of the Spirit of God, it sends forth its infinite varieties of devotion, which, rolling on from echo to echo, from soul to soul, awakes in each a separate note, mingling in that one prolonged voice of thankfulness and prayer, penitence and praise.—GEIKIE.

APRIL 15.

And where I am, there shall also My servant be.—JOHN xii. 26.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal rest;
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and completely blest.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Thy unveil'd glory to behold;
Then only will this wandering heart
Cease to be treacherous, faithless, cold.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Where spotless saints Thy Name adore;
Then only will this evil heart
Be sinful and defiled no more.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Where none can die, where none remove :
There neither life nor death can part
Me from Thy presence and Thy love.

APRIL 16.

Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

LUKE xxi. 28.

Meteors have their course, and burst into darkness; it is only the sun which shines the same over all ages. The conservatism natural to religious belief may give other faiths a lingering hold in the area they gained while in vigour, but they stand like the stagnant and shrinking waters of some passing flood, not the bright flow of a steady stream. Other faiths stand like girdled trees—monuments of decay, drooping and sickly. Christianity, like the tree of life, spreads its shadow with each passing century, and bears all kinds of fruits, and its leaves are healing. Its seeds, scattered in land after land, spring fresh and fair in every clime, with banyan groves for each single shoot. Most certainly Christianity is the religion of the future. Even now it forms the public opinion of the ruling

nations; its spirit is, insensibly, pervading the world. Jesus Christ is extending His invisible kingdom in the hearts of all races, with each generation winning millions of subjects from every speech and country and colour, and indirectly affecting even communities most opposed to a rule so pure and lofty; and this can come from nothing but the living power in His words and story.—
GEIKIE.

APRIL 17.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.—PROVERBS xxvii. 17.

Company is one of the greatest pleasures of the nature of man, for the beams of joy are made hotter by reflection when related to another; and likewise gladness itself must grieve for want of one to express itself to. It is unnatural to a man to court and hug solitariness. Why, then, should any man affect to environ himself with so deep and great reservedness as not to communicate with the society of others? The company he keeps is the comment by help whereof man expounds the most close and mystical man. To affect always to be the best of the company argues a base disposition. Gold always worn in the same purse with silver loses both of the colour and weight, and so to converse always with his inferior degrades a man of his worth. Such there are who love to be the lords of the company, whilst the rest must be their tenants, as if bound by that lease to approve what they say.

It is excellent for one to have a library of scholars. Such men's talk should be thy lectures. Good company is always profitable while a man lives.—
FULLER.

APRIL 18.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

MATTHEW vi. 21.

Treasure implies both price and store of the dearest commodities; never so great abundance of base things cannot make a treasure; but where there is a large congestion of precious jewels and metals, there only is treasure. If any at all, surely very little and mean is the wealth which I can promise myself here—mere earthly dross, which may load, but cannot enrich my soul. My only true riches are above, with Thee, O my God; and where, then, should my heart be but there? My hand and my brain too must necessarily be sometimes here below; but my heart shall be still with my treasure in heaven. It is wont to be said, that, however the memory of old age is short, yet that no old man ever forgot where he laid up his treasure. O God, let not that celestial treasure which Thou hast laid up for me be at any time out of my thoughts; let my eye ever be upon it, and my heart long for the full possession of it!—BISHOP HALL.

APRIL 19.

We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour or our friend farewell ;
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

KEBLE.

I find some holy men that have gone aside from the world into some solitary wilderness, that they might have their full scope of enjoying Thee, O Lord, freely, without any secular avocations. Surely I could easily admire the report of their holiness, and emulate their mortified retiredness, if I did not hear them say, "The world dwells in the wood," and that they could as soon leave themselves, as the world behind them. There is no desert so wild, no mountains or rocks so craggy, wherein I would not gladly seek Thee, O my God, if I could hope that solitude would yield a spiritual advantage of more enjoying Thee; but, alas! I find our weak powers are subject to an unavoidable lassitude, and we can no more contemplate always those divine objects than our bodily eyes are able to fix themselves on the body of the sun in his brightest splendour. But, O my God, do Thou so fix my soul upon Thee, that whatever occasion shall take me up I may never be out of Thy blessed society; and make me so insensible of the noise of the world, that even in the midst of the market I may be still alone with Thee!—BISHOP HALL.

APRIL 20.

The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 CORINTHIANS iv. 13.

It is disparagement enough that the Apostle casts upon all the visible things of this world, that "the things which are seen are temporary." Be they never so glorious, yet, being transitory, they cannot be worthy of our hearts. Who would care for a house of glass, if never so curiously painted and gilded? All things that are measured by time are thus brittle. Even that goodly fabric of heaven, which we see and admire, must be changed; and, in a sort, dissolved. How much more vanishing are all earthly glories! What madness, then, were it in us to set our hearts upon these perishing contentments, which we must soon mutually leave—we them, they us! Eternity is that only thing which is worthy to take up the thoughts of a wise man. O eternity, thou bottomless abyss of misery to the wicked; thou indeterminable pitch of joy to the saints of God; what soul is able to comprehend thee, what strength of understanding is able to conceive of thee? Be thou ever in my thoughts, ever before mine eyes! Lord, sharpen Thou the eyes of my faith, that I may see those things invisible, and may in that light enjoy Thy blessed eternity!—BISHOP HALL.

APRIL 21.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord.—PSALM xxvii. 11.

What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners a familiar and easy introduction—a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are matured before—a strong confirmation to the most perfect amongst others—heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of the world to come,—all good to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times really to be found.—HOOKER.

APRIL 22.

My voice is to the sons of man.—PROVERBS viii. 4.

Despise not little sins,
For mountain-high may stand
The pilèd heap made up
Of smallest grains of sand.

Despise not little sins;
The gallant ship may sink,
Though only drop by drop
The watery tide it drink.

The soul is that fair bride
Which hell and heaven woo,
And one perforce must win,
To make or to undo.

Sin, not till it is left
Will duly sinful seem ;
A man must waken first,
Ere he can tell his dream.

TRENCH.

APRIL 23.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities ; all is vanity.—ECCLESIASTES i. 2.

What a fool were I, if I should think to find that which Solomon could not—contentment upon earth ! His greatness, wealth, and wisdom gave him opportunity to search, where my impotency is shut out ; were there anything under heaven free from vanity and vexation, his curious inquisition could not have missed it. No, alas ! all our earthly contentments are like a Jewish Passover, which we must eat with sour herbs. Have I wealth ? I cannot be void of cares. Have I honour ? I cannot be rid of envy. Have I knowledge ? “He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow,” saith the kingly preacher. Have I children ? it were strange if without crosses. Have I pleasures ? not without sting. Have I health ? not without the threats of disease. Have I beauty ? not without a snare to my soul. Thus it is in all our sublunary comforts ; I cannot have the rose, but I must be content with the prickles. Pure and absolute pleasure dwells elsewhere, far above the

reach of this vale of misery. O God, give me to seek it there only; not without a contemptuous neglect of all those deceitful vanities which would withdraw my soul from Thee! Let me take what Thou givest me with patience and thankfulness—thankfulness for the meat, and patience with the sauce!—BISHOP HALL.

APRIL 24.

When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.—HEBREWS i. 3.

And now, O blessed Saviour, how is my soul ravished with the meditation of Thy glorious reception into Thy heaven! Surely, if the inhabitants of those celestial mansions may be capable of any increase of joy, they then both found and showed it, when they saw and welcomed Thee entering, in Thy glorified humility, into that Thy eternal palace of blessedness; and if there could be any higher or sweeter ditty of hallelujah, it was then sung by the choir of angels and saints. And may Thy poor servants, wayfaring and wandering here upon earth, even second them in those heavenly songs of praises and gratulations; for wherein stands all our safety, hope, comfort, happiness, but in this, that Thou, our Jesus, art “received up into glory,” and, having conquered all divers powers, sittest on the right hand of God the Father, crowned with honour and majesty?—BISHOP HALL.

ST. MARK'S DAY.

APRIL 25.

He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.—EPHESIANS iv. 11.

So when this solemn day, each year, returns,
And, tossed about with winds, the sacred ark
Seeks the Rock's shelter, and there duly learns
All that we owe th' Evangelist St. Mark;
The heavenly doctrine of that blessed word
Which he embalmed in Holy Scripture's page,
To be lisp'd out by youth, conn'd o'er by age;
Read by the learn'd, by the unlearn'd heard;
Then let the fervour of Thy Gospel truth
Fill every heart, O Lord, throughout the land,
Until young men and maidens, age and youth,
Swell with one voice that great prophetic band,
Which must be found amid the sons of men,
Ere Thou, O Saviour Christ, to earth return again.

MONSELL.

APRIL 26.

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people
of God.—1 PETER ii. 10.

How different was the religion of the Jewish nation from that of the contemporary Gentiles! "One God," the Creator and Judge of the world, and the Author of all good, was the only object of adoration; and there was nothing of that separation between religion and morality which in other nations was the road to all impurity. The will and approbation of Jehovah was the motive and support of all

holiness; faith in His Word was the power which raised men above their natural weakness. . . . The devotional Scriptures of the Jews express that heartfelt sense of infirmity and sin, that peculiar spirit of prayer, that real communion with God, with which the Christian in his best moments has the truest sympathy. . . . So that the Hebrew Psalms have passed into the devotions of the Christian Church. There is a light on all the mountains of Judæa which never shone on Olympus or Parnassus; and the "hill of Zion," in which "it pleased God to dwell," is the type of "the joy of the whole earth," while the seven hills of Rome are the symbol of tyranny and idolatry. "He shewed His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He dealt not so with any nation; neither had the heathen knowledge of His laws."—CONYBEARE AND HOWSON.

APRIL 27.

My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home, in life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
"Thy will be done."

Thou, God, knowest what is best to be given to each; and why this man hath less, and that more, is not for us, but for Thee, to understand, for unto Thee each man's deservings are fully known. Wherefore, O Lord God, I reckon it even a benefit not to have many things, whence praise and glory may appear outwardly, and after the thought of men. Thou,

Lord, hast chosen the poor and humble, and those who are poor in this world, to be Thy friends and acquaintances. So give all Thine apostles witness, whom Thou hast made princes in all lands. Nothing ought so much to rejoice him who loveth Thee, and knoweth Thy benefits, as Thy will in him, and the good pleasure of Thine eternal providence, where-with he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least as any other would be the greatest; as peaceable and contented in the lowest as in the highest place, and willingly held of small and low account.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

APRIL 28.

How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

ROMANS viii. 32.

What a wretched narrowness of heart is this which I find in myself—that, when I may have all things, I take up with nothing; and, when I may be possessed of an infinite good, I please myself by grasping a little thick clay! It was a large word that the Apostle said to his Corinthians, “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.” What! shall we think they were richer than their neighbours; or is not this the condition of all those of whom he can say, in the next world, “Ye are Christ’s”? There, there comes in all our right to this infinite wealth. In ourselves, we are beggars; in Him, who is Lord of all, we are feoffed in all

things. How else should all things be ours, if God were not ours, without whom all is nothing? And how should God the Father be ours, without that Son of His love, who hath said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine?" If, then, Christ be mine, all is mine; and if I have so oft received Him, and so often renewed my union with Him, how is He but mine? O Saviour, let me feel myself thoroughly possessed of Thee! Whether the world slide or sink, I am happy.—BISHOP HALL.

APRIL 29.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus.—LUKE xxiv. 13.

It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our Surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The further traced, enriched them still the more;
They thought Him, and they justly thought Him, One
Sent to do more than He appear'd t' have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd He should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A Stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them, with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged a share.

Inform'd, He gathered up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all He said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That, reaching home, the night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast;
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all He deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?

COWPER.

APRIL 30.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.—PSALM xiv. 1.

What fools doth the devil make of those men,
which would fain otherwise be accounted wise!
Wise Solomon speaks of the wickedness of folly;
and we may no less truly invert it: the folly of
wickedness. The fool, saith our Saviour, builds his
house upon the sand, so as it may be washed away
with the next waves; what other doth the foolish
worldling, that builds all his hopes upon uncertain
riches, momentary pleasures, deceitful favours?
The fool, saith Solomon, walketh in darkness. The
sinner walks in the darkness of ignorance, through
the works of darkness, to the pit of darkness. The
worldling may, perhaps, hit the way through the
golden gates of honour, or down to the mines of
wealth, or to the flowery garden of pleasure; but
“the way of true peace he knows not;” he no more
knows the way to heaven than if there were none.

Lastly, the fool is apt to part with his patrimony for some gay toys; and how ready is the carnal heart to cast away the favour of God, the inheritance of heaven, the salvation of his soul, for these vain earthly trifles!—BISHOP HALL.

ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES'S DAY.

MAY 1.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.—JOHN xvi. 6.

Thou the Way art, Thou the Prize
That beyond the journey lies;
Thou the Truth art, Thou the Guide,
Gone before, yet by our side;
Everlasting life below
It is—truly Thee to know:
Such to Thy saints wast Thou of yore;
Unchangeable Thou art, and shalt be evermore.

Thus with Thee are link'd the names
Of St. Philip and St. James;
Thee they found, both night and day,
Precious "Truth," and guarded "Way;"
Thee, in the last martyr strife,
Thee, O Lord, they found their "Life!"
Sure, what to them Thou wast of yore,
Unchangeable Thou art, and shalt be evermore.

Would we follow, true and bold,
Steps of holy men of old;
Freely leave the world, to prove
Our life their undying love;
And as freely life lay down,
To receive a martyr's crown?
O Saviour of the saints of yore,
Be Thou to us, what Thou to them wast evermore.

MONSELL.

MAY 2.

Praise ye the Lord : for it is good to sing praises unto our God.

PSALM cxlvii. 1.

David, the royal Psalmist, had just finished one of his most beautiful psalms in honour of his great Deliverer, and the air which he breathed was still fragrant with that soft gale from heaven which day by day, as the sun uprose, played upon his harp-strings, and awoke him by its melody. Then came Satan, the enemy of man, and stood beside him, and filled the heart of the king with pride because of his song. "Hast Thou, O Almighty God," said he, "any other living creature in all the earth whose song can be compared to mine?" As he spake these words, a grasshopper alighted upon the hem of his long-flowing garment, and began to chirrup with a clear glad voice; this one grasshopper was speedily joined by many others, and the air resounded with their united notes. Then a nightingale from a neighbouring tree began to pour forth its soul in exquisite melody, evoking answering voices from other nightingales sheltered in the thick green boughs of the surrounding trees. And God opened the ear of the king, and he understood the chirp of the grasshoppers, the song of the birds, the murmur of the brooks, the rustling of the leaves, the silent marching of the stars, the uprising and downgoing of the sun. Lost in wonder at the unceasing and unwearying voice of all creation singing its Maker's praise, he remained wrapt in silent awe. Humbled

and abashed, he smote the strings of his harp, and sung, "All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord. . . . Praise the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, praise His Holy Name."—HERDER.

MAY 3.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 TIMOTHY ii. 3.

We talk of mighty warriors that have done great exploits in conquering kingdoms; but the Spirit of God tells us of a greater conquest than all theirs: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). Alas! the conquest of those great commanders was but poor and partial, of some small spots of the earth; the conquest of the regenerate Christian is universal, of the whole world. Those other conquerors, while they prevailed abroad, were yet overcome at home; and, while they were the lords of nations, were no other than vassals to their own lusts: these begin their victories at home, and enlarge their triumphs over all their spiritual enemies. The glory of those other victors was laid down with their bodies in the dust; the glory that attends these is eternal. What pity it is that the true Christian should not know his own greatness, that he may raise his thoughts accordingly, and bear himself as one that tramples the world under his feet!—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 4.

For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

It matters not a little with whom we hold our familiar conversation ; for commonly we are transformed into the dispositions and manners of those whose company we frequent. Why shouldst thou not, then, O my soul, by a continual conversation with God and His angels, improve to a heavenly disposition ? Thou canst not while thou art here but have somewhat to do with the world ; that will necessarily intrude into thy presence, and force upon thee businesses unavoidable ; and thy secular friends may well look to have some share in thy sociable entertainments. But these are but goers and comers, easily and willingly dismissed after some kind interlocutions ; the company that must stick by thee is spiritual, which shall never leave thee if thou have the grace to apply thyself to them upon all occasions. Thou mayst hold fair correspondence with all other, not offensive companions ; but thy entireness must be only with these. Let those other be never so faithful, yet they are uncertain ; be their will never so good, yet their power is limited : these are never but at hand ; never but able and willing to make and keep thee happy. O my God, Thou seest how subject I am to distractions. Oh, hold me close to Thee : let me enter into the same company here in my pilgrimage which I shall for ever enjoy hereafter in my home.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 5.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
JAMES v. 16.

When the mouth praiseth, man heareth; when the heart, God heareth. Every good prayer knocketh at heaven for a blessing; but an importunate prayer pierceth it, though as hard as brass, and makes way for itself into the ears of the Almighty. And, as it ascends lightly up, carried with the wings of faith; so it comes ever laden down again, upon our heads. In my prayers, my thoughts shall not be guided by my words; but my words shall follow my thoughts.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 6.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.—MATTHEW vi. 20.

It is a sure word of Thine, O Saviour, that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also. Neither can we easily know where to find our hearts, if our treasure did not discover them. Now, Lord, where is my treasure? Surely I am not worthy to be owned of Thee if my treasure be anywhere but in heaven. My lumber and luggage may be here on earth, but my treasure is above; there Thou hast laid up for me the richest of Thy mercies, even my eternal salvation. Yea, Lord, what is my richest treasure but Thyself; in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yea, of infinite glory, are laid up for all Thine. All things that this world

can afford me are but mere pelf, in comparison of this treasure; or, if the world could yet yield ought that is precious, yet I cannot call that treasure.—
BISHOP HALL.

MAY 7.

When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied
with it.—PSALM xvii. 16.

Doubtless, O God, Thou, that hast given to men, even thine enemies, here upon earth, so excellent means to please their outward senses—such beautiful faces and admirable flowers, to delight the eye; such delicate scents from their garden, to please the smell; such curious confections and delicate sauces, to please the taste; such sweet music from the birds, and artificial devices of ravishing melody from the art of man, to delight the ear—hast much more ordained transcendent pleasures and infinite contentments, for Thy glorified saints above. My soul, while it is thus clogged and confined, is too strait to conceive of those incomprehensible ways of spiritual delectation, which Thou hast provided for Thy dear chosen ones, triumphing with Thee in Thy heaven. Oh, teach me to wonder at that which I cannot here attain to know; and to long for that happiness which I there hope to enjoy with Thee for ever.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 8.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.—1 THESSALONIANS v. 4.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
 We find a little isle, this life of man ;
 Eternity's unknown expanse appears
 Circling around and limiting his years.
 The busy race examine and explore
 Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
 With care collect what in their eyes excels,
 Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;
 Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
 And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
 The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
 And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;
 They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
 A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes
 Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
 Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above
 Sealed with His signet whom they serve and love ;
 Scorned by the rest, with patient hope they wait
 A kind release from their imperfect state,
 And unregretted are soon snatched away
 From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

COWPER.

MAY 9.

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh to buffet me.
 2 CORINTHIANS xii. 7.

Whatever this affliction was, it was something which, to our unsubdued impatience, would have been a perpetual source of mortification and vexation, though to him it became, through grace, a

source of triumph. He "prayed thrice that the suffering might be removed from him," and the prayer was granted by being turned into a thanksgiving; for the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee," etc. "Most gladly, therefore," he adds, "will I glory in my infirmities." What this particular form of weakness and suffering was, we shall never know. It is easy enough to conjecture, and impossible to prove. But the essential point is, not what the trial was in itself, but what it was to him, what he felt it to be. We often feel our troubles far more than would be supposed possible by others, who only see us from without. If we had beheld St. Paul, he might have appeared to us brave enough. We might have had no conception of his inward sense of feebleness. The main point of his trial was the effect on the apostle's mind, and that effect was humiliation. Let us gain some benefit to ourselves from his bitter experience.—HOWSON.

MAY 10.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.—PSALM xxxvii. 5.

He that taketh his own cares upon himself, loads himself in vain with an uneasy burden. The fear of what may come, expectation of what will come, desire of what will not come, and inability of redressing all these, must needs breed him continual torment. I will cast my cares upon God: He hath bidden me: they cannot hurt Him; He can redress them.

That which the French proverb hath of sicknesses is true of all evils: that they come on horseback, and go away on foot. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of, the longer they will continue; and for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers, with slight respect. He is his own best friend, that makes least of both of them.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 11.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches.—PSALM civ. 24.

The longer I live, O my God, the more do I wonder at all the works of Thy hands. I see such admirable artifice in the very least and most despicable of all Thy creatures, as doth every day more and more astonish my observation. I need not look so far as heaven for matter of marvel, though therein Thou art infinitely glorious; while I have but a spider in my window, or a bee in my garden, or a worm under my feet, every one of these overcomes me with a just amazement. Yet, can I see no more than their very outsides; their inward form, which gives their being and operations, I cannot pierce unto. The less I can know, O Lord, the more let me wonder; and the less I can satisfy myself with marvelling at Thy works, the more let me adore the majesty and omnipotence of Thee that wroughtest them.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 12.

I am brought into so great trouble and misery, that I mourn all the day long.—PSALM xxxviii. 6.

Alas, Lord! how tenderly sensible I am of the least bodily complaint that can befall me! If but a tooth begin to ache, or a thorn have rankled in my flesh, or but an angry corn vex my toe, how am I incessantly troubled with the pain! how feelingly do I bemoan myself! how carefully do I seek for a speedy remedy! But for the better part, which is so much more tender as it is more precious, with what patience, shall I call it, or stupidity, do I endure if wounded, were it not for Thy great mercy, no less than mortally! Every new sin, how little soever that I commit, fetches blood of the soul; every willing sin stabs it; the continuance wherein festers inwardly, and, without repentance, kills. O God, I desire to be ashamed and humbled under Thy hand for this so unjust partiality, which gives me just cause to fear that sense hath yet more predominance in me than faith. Let me feel my sin more painful than the worst disease; and, rather than wilfully sin, let me die.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 13.

With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.—**PSALM xcvi. 6.**

What a marvellously cheerful service was that, O God, which Thou requiredst, and hadst performed under the law! Here was not a dumb and silent act in Thy sacrifices. Here was the merry noise of most melodious music, singing of psalms, and sounding of all harmonious instruments; the congregation were upon their knees, the Levites upon their stage, sweetly singing, the priests sounding the trumpets, together with cymbals, harps, psalteries, making up one sound in praising and thanking the Lord. Methinks I hear, and am ravished to hear, in some of Thy solemn days, a hundred and twenty of thy priests sounding with trumpets; Thy Levites in greater number, singing aloud, with the mixture of their musical instruments; so as not the temple only, but the heaven rings again. . . . If we have not the same sounds with Thy legal worshippers, yet we should still have the same affections; as they might not wait upon Thee sorrowful, so it is not for us to praise Thee with drooping and dejected spirits.—**BISHOP HALL.**

MAY 14.

Yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.—**JOB ii. 4.**

We are all of us naturally desirous to live; and though we prize life above all earthly things, yet we are ashamed to profess that we desire it for its own

sake ; but pretend some other subordinate reason to affect it. One would live to finish his building, or to clear his purchases ; another to breed up his children, and to see them well matched ; one would fain outlive his trial at law ; another would fain outlast a lease that holds him off from his long-expected possessions. Thus we that would be glad to give skin for skin and all things for life, but seem to wish life for anything but itself. After all this hypocrisy, nature, above all things, would live, and make life the main end of living : but grace has higher thoughts ; and therefore, though it holds life sweet and desirable, yet entertains the love of it upon more excellent, that is, spiritual terms. O God, I have no reason to be weary of this life, which through Thy mercy long acquaintance hath endeared to me, though sauced with some bitter disgusto of age ; but how unworthy shall I approve myself of so great a blessing, if now I do not more desire to continue it for Thy sake, than my own !—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 15.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it !—PROVERBS xv. 23.

Why furnish with such care
Thy lodging of a night,
And leave thy lasting home
In such a naked plight ?

When thou hast thanked thy God
For every blessing sent,
What time will then remain
For murmurs or lament ?

Thou canst not choose but serve—
Man's lot is servitude;
But this of choice thou hast,
A bad Lord, or a good.

Man is a star of heaven,
Cast down upon the earth;
A prince in beggar's weeds,
Half conscious of his birth.

TRENCH.

MAY 16.

And this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and
Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.—JOHN xvii. 5.

O Lord God, how ambitious, how covetous of knowledge, is this soul of mine! "As the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," no more is the mind of man with understanding; yea, so insatiable is my heart, that the more I know the more I desire to know, and the less I think I know. Under heaven there can be no bounds set to this intellectual appetite. Alas, Lord, if I could know all creatures, with all their forms, qualities, workings; if I could know as much as innocent Adam, or wise Solomon; yea, more, if I could know all that is done in earth and heaven; what were my soul the better, if it hath not attained the knowledge of Thee? Since, as the Preacher hath most wisely observed, "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Oh, then, set off my heart from affecting that knowledge whose end is sorrow, and fix it upon that knowledge which brings everlasting life.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 17.

In Thy presence is the fulness of joy.—**PSALM xvi. 12.**

How slowly the hours seem to pace when we are anxiously desiring and expecting some earthly contentment! We are ready to chide the time for standing still, when we would overhasten the fruition of our approaching comfort. Were it not, my soul, for that wretched infidelity, which cleaves so close unto thee, thou couldst not but be thus affected to thy heaven; and shouldst be yet so much more, as the joys there are infinitely more exquisite than those which this earth can afford. What! hast thou no stomach to this happiness? Hath the world so benumbed thee with such a dull stupidity, that thou art grown regardless and insensible of eternal blessedness? Yea, Lord, do Thou stir up that heavenly fire that now lies raked up in the embers of my soul, and ravish my heart with a longing desire of Thy salvation.—**BISHOP HALL.**

MAY 18.

Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.—**HEBREWS xii. 6.**

How profitable and beneficial a thing is affliction; especially to some dispositions more than others! I see some trees that will not thrive unless their roots be laid bare—unless, besides pruning, their bodies be gashed and sliced; others, that are too luxuriant, except divers of their blossoms be seasonably pulled

off, yield nothing. I see, too, rank corn, if it be not timely eaten down, may yield something to the barn, but little to the granary. Such is the condition of our spiritual part; it is a rare soul that can be kept in any constant order without these smarting remedies: I confess mine cannot. How wild had I run if the rod had not been over me! Every man can say he thanks God for ease; for me, I bless God for my troubles!—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 19.

There was a man named Zacchæus, . . . and he sought to see Jesus who He was.—LUKE xix. 2, 3.

Had I been in the streets of Jericho, sure, methinks, I should have jostled with Zaccheus for the sycamore, to see Jesus; and should have blessed my eyes for so happy a prospect: and yet I consider that many a one saw His face on earth, which shall never see His glory in heaven; and I hear the apostle say, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him so no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). Oh for the eyes of a Stephen, "that saw the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts vii. 56). That prospect did as much transcend this of Zaccheus, as heaven is above earth; celestial glory above human infirmity. And why should not the eyes of my faith behold the same object, which was seen by Stephen's bodily eyes? I see Thee, O Saviour, I see Thee; as

certainly, though not so clearly. Do Thou sharpen and fortify these weak eyes of mine, "that in Thy light I may see light" (Psalm xxxvi. 9).—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 20.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—PSALM xc. 12.

There was never good thing easily come by. The heathen man could say, "God sells knowledge for sweat." Never any man hath got either wealth or learning with ease. Therefore, the greatest good must needs be most difficult. How shall I hope to get Christ, if I take no pains for Him? And if, in all other things, the difficulty of obtaining whets the mind so much the more to seek, why should it in this alone daunt me? I will not care what I do, what I suffer, so I may win Christ. If men can endure such cutting, such lancing, and searing of their bodies, to protract a miserable life yet a while longer, what pain should I refuse for eternity?—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 21.

A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.
PROVERBS i. 5.

I will account no sin little, since there is not one the least, but works out the death of the soul. It is all one, whether I be drowned in the ebber shore, or in the midst of the deep sea.

I find that all worldly things require a long labour in getting, and afford a short pleasure in enjoying them. I will not care much for what I have; nothing, for what I have not.

I account this body nothing but a close prison to my soul; and the earth a larger prison to my body. I may not break prison till I be loosed by death; but I will leave it, not unwillingly, when I am loosed.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 22.

Seek peace, and pursue it.—PSALM xxxiv. 14.

Far from mankind, my weary soul, retire,
Still follow truth, contentment still desire.
Who climbs on high, at best his weakness shows;
Who rolls in riches, all to fortune owes.
Read well thyself, and mark thy early ways;
Vain is the muse, and envy waits on praise.

Wavering as winds the breath of fortune blows,
No power can turn it and no prayers compose;
Deep in some hermit's solitary cell
Repose, and ease, and contemplation dwell.
Let conscience guide thee in the days of need;
Judge well thy own, and then thy neighbour's deed.

What heaven bestows, with thankfulness receive;
First ask thy heart, and then through faith believe.
Slowly we wander o'er a toilsome way,
Shadows of life and pilgrims of a day.
Who, restless in this world, receives a fall,
Look up on high, and thank thy God for all.

CHAUCER.

MAY 23.

Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—**COLOSSIANS** iii. 1.

How many poor souls take tedious, costly, perilous voyages to that land, which only the bodily presence of our Saviour could denominate holy ; their own wickedness, justly styles accursed ; only to see the place where our dear Saviour trod ; where He stood, where He sat, lay, set His last footing ; and find a kind of contentment in this sacred curiosity, returning yet never the holier, never the happier ! How then should I be affected with the sight of that place, where He is now in person, sitting gloriously at the right hand of Majesty, adored by all the powers of heaven ! Let it be a covenant between me and my eyes never to look up at heaven, but I shall, in the same instant, think of my blessed Saviour, sitting there in His glorified humanity, united to the incomprehensibly glorious Deity, attended and worshipped by thousand thousands of saints and angels, preparing a place for me and all His elect in those eternal mansions.—**BISHOP HALL.**

MAY 24.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.—**GENESIS** ii. 7.

In the first minute wherein we live we enter upon an eternity of being ; and though at the first, through the want of the exercise of reason, we cannot

know it, and afterwards, through our inconsideration and the bewitching businesses of time, we do not seriously lay it to heart, we are in a state of everlastingness. There must, upon the necessity of our mortality, be a change in our condition; but with a perpetuity of our being: the body must undergo a temporary dissolution, and the soul a remove either to bliss or torment; but both of them, on their meeting, shall continue in an unchangeable duration for ever and ever; and, if we are wont to slight transitory and vanishing commodities by reason of their momentary continuance, and to make most account of things durable, what care and great thought ought I to bestow upon myself, who shall outlast the present world! And how ought I to frame my life so as it may fall upon an eternity infinitely happy and glorious! O God, do Thou set off my heart from all these earthly vanities, and fix it above with Thee! As there shall be no end of my being, so let there be no change of my affections; let them beforehand take possession of that heaven of Thine, whereto I am aspiring. Let nothing but this clay of mine be left remaining on this earth; let my spirit part be ever with Thee, whence it came, and enter upon that bliss which knows neither change nor end.—BISHOP HALL.

MAY 25.

The way to heaven is by Weeping Cross.—PROVERB.

Thou must still be tried upon earth, and be exercised in many things. Consolation shall from time to time be given thee, but abundant satisfying shall not be granted. Be strong, therefore, and be thou brave, both in working and in suffering things which are against thy nature. Men must put on the new man, and be changed into another man. Thou must often do what thou wouldst not, and thou must leave undone what thou wouldst do. What pleaseth others shall have good success, what pleaseth thee shall have no prosperity. What others say shall be listened to, what thou sayst shall receive no heed. Others shall ask and receive, thou shalt ask and not obtain. Others shall be great in the report of men, but about thee shall nothing be spoken. To others this or that shall be entrusted, thou shalt be judged useful for nothing. For this cause nature shall sometimes be filled with sadness, and it is a great thing if thou bear it silently.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MAY 26.

Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee : Thou saidst,
Fear not.—LAMENTATIONS iii. 57.

It is good for us that we sometimes have sorrows and adversities, for they often make a man lay to heart that he is only a stranger and sojourner, and

may not put his trust in any worldly thing. It is good that we sometimes endure contradictions, and are hardly and unfairly judged when we do and mean what is good. For these things help us to be humble, and shield us from vainglory. For then we seek the more earnestly the witness of God, when men speak evil of us falsely, and give us no credit for good. Therefore ought a man to rest wholly upon God, so that he needeth not seek much comfort at the hand of man. When a man who feareth God is afflicted, or tried, or oppressed with evil thoughts, then he seeth that God is the more necessary unto him; he groaneth, he crieth out for the very disquietness of his heart. Then he groweth heavy of heart, and would fain depart and be with Christ. By all this he is taught there can be no perfect security or fulness of peace in the world.—
IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MAY 27.

Be not wise in your own conceits.—ROMANS xii. 16.

We must not trust every word of others or feeling within ourselves, but cautiously and patiently try the matter whether it be of God. Unhappily, we are so weak that we find it easier to believe and speak evil of others, rather than good. But they that are perfect, do not give ready heed to every news-bearer, for they know man's weakness, that it is prone to evil and unstable in words. This is great wisdom, not to be hasty in action or stubborn

in our own opinions. A part of this wisdom also is not to believe every word we hear, nor to tell others all that we hear, even though we believe it. Take counsel with a man who is wise, and of a good conscience; and seek to be instructed by one better than thyself, rather than to follow thine own inventions. The more humble a man is in himself, and the more obedient towards God, the wiser will he be in all things, and the more shall his soul be at peace.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MAY 28.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.—1 JOHN iii. 1.

Take heed, My son, that thou treat not curiously those things which surpass thy knowledge, but rather make this thy business, and give attention to it, namely, that thou seek to be found, even though it be the least, in the kingdom of God. And even if any one should know who were holier than others, or who were held greatest in the kingdom of heaven, what should that knowledge profit him, unless through this knowledge he should humble himself before Me, and should rise up to give greater praise unto My name? He who considereth how great are his own sins, how small his virtues, and how far he is removed from the perfection of the saints, doeth far more acceptably in the sight of God than he who disputeth about their greatness or littleness. It is a great thing to be even the least

in heaven, where all are great, because all shall be called, and shall be, the sons of God.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MAY 29.

Hear ; for I will speak of excellent things.—PROVERBS viii. 6.

Forget not death, O man ! for thou mayst be
Of one thing certain,—he forgets not thee.

Speaks one of good which falls not to thy lot,—
He also speaks of ill which thou hast not.

Oh, square thyself for use ; a stone that may
Fit in the wall is left not in the way.

While in the lips thy words thou dost confine,
Thou art their lord ; once uttered, they are thine.

Oh, seize the instant time. You never will
With waters once pass'd by impel the mill.

How shall the praise of silence best be told ?
To speak is silver, to hold peace is gold.

TRENCH.

MAY 30.

In the world ye shall have tribulation.—JOHN xvi. 33.

How can the life of man be loved, seeing that it hath so many bitter things, that it is subjected to so many calamities and miseries ? How can it be even called life, when it produces so many deaths and plagues ? The world is often reproached because it is deceitful and vain, yet, notwithstanding, it is not easily given up, because the lusts of the flesh have too much rule over it. Some draw us to love, some to hate. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,

and the pride of life, these draw to love of the world; but the punishments and miseries which righteously follow these things bring forth hatred of the world and weariness. But alas! an evil desire conquereth a mind given to the world, and thinketh it happiness to be under the nettles, because it savoureth not, nor perceiveth the sweetness of God, nor the inward gracefulness of virtue. Oh, what a life is this, where tribulations and miseries cease not, where all things are full of snares and of enemies; for when one tribulation or temptation goeth, another cometh—yea, while the former conflict is yet raging, others come, more in number and unexpected.—
IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MAY 31.

Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon Him.

PSALM xxxvii. 7.

My son, patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to Me, than much comfort and devotion in prosperity. Why doth a little thing spoken against thee make thee sad? If it had been more, thou still oughtest not to be moved. But now suffer it to go by; it is not the first, it is not new, and it will not be the last if thou live long. Thou art brave enough so long as no adversity meeteth thee. Thou givest good counsel also, and knowest how to strengthen others with thy words; but when tribulation suddenly knocketh at thine own door, thy counsel and strength fail. Consider thy great

frailty which thou dost so often experience in trifling matters; nevertheless, for thy soul's health these things are done. At least bear patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. And although thou be very unwilling to hear it, and feel indignation, yet check thyself, and suffer no unadvised word to come forth from thy lips. Soon the storm which hath been raised shall be stilled, and inward grief shall be sweetened by returning grace. I yet live, saith the Lord, ready to help thee, and to give thee more than wonted consolation, if thou put thy trust in Me.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 1.

I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me.

PSALM xl. 17.

Ah, well! she had her will,
Though not as she decreed it! God saw best
To plant the warfare in her own poor breast;
To make herself her hardest, bitterest ill.

Hers was a battle where no mortal eyes
Beamed courage, and no voice cried, "Well!"
But in the view of angels' companies

She rose and fell.

She seemed not great, nor good;
She stood her little space, amid the world:
A soldier with a banner half unfurled,
A pure, high nature misunderstood.

She loved, yet none clung closely to her side;
She lived, yet scarcely seemed to help a child;
Few shed a tear of sorrow when she died:

The angels smiled.

ANON.

JUNE 2.

Take heed unto thyself.—1 TIMOTHY iv. 16.

The spiritually minded man putteth care for himself before all cares; and he who diligently attendeth to himself, easily keepeth silence concerning others. Thou wilt never be spiritually minded and godly unless thou art silent concerning other men's matters, and take full heed to thyself. If thou think wholly upon thyself and upon God, what thou seest out of doors shall move thee little. Where art thou when thou art not present to thyself? and when thou hast overrun all things, what hath it profited thee, thyself being neglected? Thou shalt lamentably fall away if thou set a value upon any worldly thing. Let nothing be great, nothing high, nothing pleasing, nothing acceptable unto thee save God Himself or the things of God. The soul that loveth God looketh not to anything that is beneath God. God alone is eternal and incomprehensible, filling all things; the solace of the soul, and the true joy of the heart.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 3.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?—ROMANS vii. 24.

Lose not, brother, thy loyal desire of progress in things spiritual; there is yet time, the hour is not past. Why wilt thou put off thy resolution? Arise, begin this very moment, and say, "Now is the time

to do, now is the time to fight, now is the proper time for amendment." When thou art ill at ease and troubled, then is the time thou art nearest unto blessings. Thou must go through fire and water, that God may bring thee unto a wealthy place. Unless thou put force upon thyself, thou wilt not conquer thy faults. So long as we carry about with us this frail body, we cannot be without sin, we cannot live without weariness and trouble. Gladly would we have rest from all misery; but, because through sin we have lost innocence, we have lost also the true happiness. Therefore must we be patient, and wait for the mercy of God until this tyranny be overpast, and this mortality is swallowed up of life.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 4.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—MATTHEW v. 3.

Oh, if thou sawest the unfading crowns of the saints in heaven, and with what great glory they now rejoice, who aforetime were reckoned by this world contemptible and, as it were, unworthy of life, truly thou wouldst immediately humble thyself even to the earth, and wouldst desire rather to be in subjection to all than to have authority over one; nor wouldst thou long for pleasant days of this life, but wouldst more rejoice to be afflicted for God's sake, and wouldst esteem it gain to be counted for naught amongst men. Are not all laborious things

to be endured for the sake of eternal life? It is no small thing, the losing or gaining the kingdom of God. Lift up, therefore, thy face to heaven. Behold I, and all My saints with Me, who in this world had a hard conflict, now rejoice, are now comforted, are now secure, are now at peace, and shall remain with Me evermore in the kingdom of My Father.—
IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 5.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—
GALATIANS vi. 2.

Those things which a man cannot amend in himself or others he ought patiently to bear, till God shall otherwise ordain. Bethink thee, perhaps it is better for thy trial and patience, without which our merits are but little worth. Nevertheless, thou oughtest, when thou findest such impediments, to beseech God that He would vouchsafe to sustain thee, that thou be able to bear them with a good will. We will that others be straightly corrected, but we will not be corrected ourselves. The freedom of others displeaseth us, but we are dissatisfied that our own wishes shall be denied us. We desire rules to be made restraining others, but by no means will we suffer ourselves to be restrained. Thus, therefore, doth it appear plainly how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves. If all men were perfect, what then should we have to suffer from others for God?—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 6.

Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 6.

Remember always thine end, and how the time which is lost returneth not. Without care and diligence thou shalt never get virtue. If thou beginnest to grow cold, it shall begin to go ill with thee; but if thou givest thyself unto zeal, thou shalt find much peace, and shalt find thy labour the lighter because of the grace of God, and the love of virtue. A zealous and a diligent man is ready for all things. It is a greater labour to resist sins and passions than to toil in bodily labours. He who shunneth not small faults falleth little by little into greater. At eventide thou shalt always be glad if thou spend the day profitably. Watch over thyself, stir thyself up, admonish thyself, and howsoever it be with others, neglect not thyself. The more violence thou dost unto thyself, the more thou shalt profit. Amen.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 7.

Charity seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked.

1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

Scarcely is there anything in which thou hast need to mortify thyself so much as in seeing and suffering things which are adverse to thy will, especially when things are commanded thee to be done which seem to thee inexpedient or of little use to thee; and because thou darest not resist a

higher power, being under authority, therefore it seemeth hard for thee to shape thy course according to the nod of another, and to forego thine own opinion. Now, therefore, bow thyself humbly under the hands of all men, nor let it trouble thee who said this, or who ordered that; but take special heed that whether thy superior or thy inferior, or thy equal, require anything of thee, or even show a desire for it; take it all in good part, and study with a good will to fulfil that desire. Let one seek this, another that; let this man glory in this, and that man in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but rejoice thou only in the contempt of thyself, and in Mine own good pleasure and glory. This is what thou art to long for; even that, whether by life or by death, God may be ever magnified in thee.—
IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 8.

For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.—REVELATION xxi. 23.

To what mighty king doth this city belong,

With its rich jewelled shrines, and its garlands of flowers;
With its breath of sweet incense, its measures of song,
And the light that is gilding its numberless towers?

See! forth from the gates, like a bridal array,

Come the princes of heaven,—how bravely they shine!

'Tis to welcome the stranger, to show me the way,

And to tell me that all I see round me is mine.

There are millions of saints, in their ranks and degrees,

And each with a beauty and crown of his own;
And there, far outnumbering the sands of the seas,

The bright ring of angels encircle the throne.

And oh, if the exiles of earth could but win
The light of the beauty of Jesus above,
From that hour they would cease to be able to sin,
And earth would be heaven, for heaven is love.

FABER.

JUNE 9.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on
Thee.—ISAIAH xxvi. 3.

In everything take heed to thyself what thou doest, and what thou sayest, and direct all thy purpose to this, that thou please Me alone, and desire or seek nothing apart from Me. But, moreover, judge nothing rashly concerning the words or deeds of others, nor meddle with matters which are not committed to thee; and it may be that thou shalt be disturbed little or rarely: yet, never to feel any disquiet, nor to suffer any pain of heart or body, this belongeth not to the present life, but is the state of eternal rest. Therefore count not thyself to have found true peace, if thou hast felt no grief; nor that then all is well, if thou hast no adversary; nor that this is perfect, if all things fall out according to thy desire. If thou be brave and long-suffering when inward comfort is taken from thee, and dost justify Me in all things that I appoint, and dost bless My holy Name, then dost thou walk in the true and right way of peace, and shalt have a sure hope that thou shalt again behold My face with joy.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 10.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.

ROMANS xii. 10.

It behoveth thee to learn to mortify thyself in many things, if thou wilt live in amity and concord with other men. If thou wilt stand, and wilt profit as thou oughtest, hold thyself as an exile and a pilgrim upon earth. Clothing and outward appearance are of small account; it is change of character and entire mortification of the affections which make a truly religious man. He who seeketh aught save God and the health of his soul, shall find only tribulation and sorrow. Thou art called to endure and labour, not to a life of ease and trifling talk. Here, therefore, are men tried as gold in the furnace. God has ordained that we may learn to bear one another's burdens, because none is without defect, none without a burden, none sufficient of himself, none wise enough of himself. Therefore it behoveth us to comfort one another, to help, instruct, and admonish one another. How much strength each man has, is best proved by occasions of adversity; for such occasions do not make a man frail, but show of what temper he is.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 11.

Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.—ACTS xiii. 7.

We ought to observe the honourable place which the island of Cyprus was permitted to occupy in the first work of Christianity. We shall soon trace the footsteps of the Apostle of the heathen in the beginning of his travels over the length of this island, and see here the first earthly potentate converted, and linking his name for ever with that of St. Paul. Now, while Saul is yet at Tarsus, men of Cyprus are made the instruments of awakening the Gentiles; one of them might be that "Mnason of Cyprus," who afterwards (then a disciple of long standing) was his host at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 16). And Joses the Levite, of Cyprus, whom the Apostles had long ago called "the Son of Consolation," and who had removed all the prejudice which looked suspiciously on Saul's conversion, is the first teacher sent by the mother Church to the new disciples at Antioch—"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith."—CONYBEARE AND HOWSON.

JUNE 12.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.—MATTHEW vii. 7.

Rest from inordinate desire of knowledge, for therein is found much distraction and deceit. Those who have knowledge desire to appear learned, and

to be called wise. Many things there are, to know which profiteth little or nothing to the soul. And foolish out of measure is he who attendeth upon other things rather than those which serve to his soul's health. Many words satisfy not the soul, but a good life refresheth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great confidence towards God. That is the highest and most profitable lesson, when a man truly knoweth and judgeth lowly of himself. To account nothing of one's self, and to think always kindly and highly of others, this is great and perfect wisdom. Even shouldst thou see thy neighbour sin openly or grievously, yet thou oughtest not to reckon thyself better than he, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt keep thy integrity. All of us are weak and frail: hold thou no man more frail than thyself.—IMITATION OF CHRIST.

JUNE 13.

Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.—COLOSSIANS iii. 1.

We cannot apprehend heaven in any notion, but of excellency and glory; that, as it is in itself a place of wonderful resplendence and majesty, so it is the palace of the Most High God, wherein He exhibits His infinite magnificence; that it is the happy receptacle of all the elect of God; that it is the glorious rendezvous of the blessed angels; that we have parents, children, husband, wife, brothers,

sisters, friends, whom we dearly loved, there. . . . Above all conceivable apprehensions, then, wherein heaven is endeared to us, there is none comparable to that which the apostle enforceth to us, that there "Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." When, therefore, we hear and certainly know that our most dear Saviour is above, in all heavenly glory, and that the heavens must contain Him till His coming again, with what full contentment of heart should we look up thither! How should we break through all these secular distractions, and be carried up by our affections, which are the wings of the soul towards a happy fruition of Him!—BISHOP HALL.

JUNE 14.

Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.—PSALM iv. 4.

One thing alone of worldly minds can be said—that before coming to the oracles of God, they are not preoccupied with the expectation and fear of them. No chord of their heart is in unison with the things unseen, no moments are set apart for religious thoughts and meditation, no anticipation of the honoured interview, no prayers of preparation like that of Daniel before Gabriel was sent to teach him, no devoutness like that of Cornelius before the celestial visitation, no fastings like that of Peter before the revelation of the glory of the Gentiles. Now, to minds which are not attuned to holiness, the words of God find no entrance, striking heavy on

the ear, seldom making way to the understanding, almost never to the heart. To spirits hot with conversation, perhaps heady with argument, uncomposed by solemn thought, but ruffled and in uproar from the concourse of worldly interests, the sacred page may be spread out, but its accents are drowned in the noise which hath not yet subsided within the breast. All the awe, and pathos, and awakened consciousness of a divine approach, impressed upon the ancients by the procession of solemnities, is to worldly men without a substitute. They have not solicited themselves to be in readiness. If they would have it bless them and do them good, they must change their manners of approaching it, and endeavour to bring themselves into that prepared and collected and reverential frame which becomes an interview with the High and Holy One.—
IRVING.

JUNE 15.

The Lord is the strength of my life.—PSALM xxvii. 1.

Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word !
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour and his glad success,
His strength to suffer and his will to serve.
But oh ! Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown !
Give what Thou canst,—without Thee we are poor ;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

COWPER.

JUNE 16.

Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might be occupied in
Thy words.—PSALM cxix. 148.

Imagine yourself somewhere placed in the air, as a spectator of all that passes in the world, and that you saw in one view the devotions which all Christian people offer unto God every day. Imagine that you saw some piously dividing the day and night, as the primitive Christians did, and constant at all hours of devotion, singing psalms and calling upon God at all those times that saints and martyrs received their gifts and graces from God. Imagine that you saw others living without any rules, as to times and frequency of prayer, and only at their devotions sooner or later, as sleep and laziness happens to permit them. Now, if you were to see this as God sees it, how do you suppose you would be affected with this sight? Could you take the one to be as true servants of God as the other? Could you imagine that those who were thus different in their lives, would find no difference in their states after death? If not, let it be now your care to join yourself to that number of devout people, to that society of saints, amongst whom you desire to be found when you leave the world.—
LAW.

JUNE 17.

I exhort therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, be made for all men.—1 TIMOTHY ii. 1.

Though we are to treat all mankind as neighbours and brethren, as any occasion offers ; yet, as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly related to some than others ; so, when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care for those amongst whom our lot is fallen, or who belong to us in a nearer relation, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves, and produces its best effects in our own hearts. This would make it pleasant to you to be courteous, civil, and condescending to all about you ; and make you unable to say or do a rude or hard thing to those for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers. For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him ; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him.—LAW.

JUNE 18.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—LORD'S PRAYER.

The apostle St. Peter puts this question to our blessed Saviour : " Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ? "

Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Not as if, after this number of offences, a man might then cease to forgive; but the expression of seventy times seven is to show us, that we are not to bound our forgiveness by any number of offences, but are to continue forgiving the most repeated offences against us. If, therefore, a man ceases to forgive his brother, because he has forgiven him often already; if he excuses himself from forgiving this man, because he has forgiven several others; such a one breaks this law of Christ, concerning the forgiving one's brother.—LAW.

JUNE 19.

For the love of money is the root of all evil.—1 TIMOTHY vi. 10.

If you should see a man that had a large pond of water, yet living in continual thirst, not suffering himself to drink half a draught, for fear of lessening his pond; if you should see him wasting his time and strength in fetching more water to his pond; always thirsty, yet always carrying a bucket of water in his hand, watching early and late to catch the drops of rain, gazing after every cloud, and running greedily into every mire and mud, in hopes of water, and always studying how to make every ditch empty itself into his pond; if you should see him grow grey and old in these anxious labours, and at last end a careful, thirsty life by falling into his own pond, would you not say that such a one was

not only the author of his own disquiet, but was foolish enough to be reckoned amongst idiots and madmen? But yet foolish and absurd as this character is, it does not represent half the follies and absurd disquiets of the covetous man. Look where you will, you will see all worldly vexations but like the vexation of him that was always in mire and mud in search of water to drink, when he had more at home than was sufficient for a hundred horses.—LAW.

JUNE 30.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.—1 PETER ii. 24.

In expressing the vanity and frailty of the natural life of man, it agrees very well with the subject to call him *flesh*, giving to the whole man the name of his corruptible part, both to make the wretched and perishing condition of this life more sensible, and man the more humble by it; for though by providing all for the flesh, and bestowing his whole time in the endeavours which are of the flesh's concernment, he remembers it too much, and forgets his spiritual and immortal part; yet in that over-eager care for the flesh, he seems, in some sense, to forget that he is flesh, or at least that flesh is perishing, because flesh; extending his desires and projects so far for the flesh as if it were immortal, and should always abide to enjoy and use those things. Thus, in men's immoderate pursuits of earth, they seem both to forget that they are any-

thing else beside flesh, and to forget also that they are flesh, that is, mortal and perishing; they rightly remember neither their immortality, nor their mortality. This natural life is compared, even by natural men, to the vainest things, even to the leaves of trees. But the light of Scripture doth most discover this, and it is a lesson that requires the Spirit of God to teach it aright.—LEIGHTON.

JUNE 21.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses.

DANIEL i. 9.

A man naturally fancies that it is his own exceeding love of virtue, that makes him not able to bear with those that want it. And when he abhors one man, despises another, and cannot bear the name of a third, he supposes it all to be a proof of his own high sense of virtue, and just hatred of sin. If this had been the spirit of the Son of God, if He had hated sin in this manner, there had been no redemption of the world. If God had hated sinners in this manner, day and night, the world itself had ceased long ago. This, therefore, we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, the more improved we are ourselves, and the higher our sense of virtue is, the more we shall pity and compassionate those that want it. The sight of such people will then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt, fill us with such bowels of compassion as when we see the miseries of a hospital.—LAW.

JUNE 22.

The Lamb is the light thereof.—REVELATION xxi. 23.

“ I hear thee speak of the better land,
Thou callest its children a happy band ;
Mother ! oh, where is that radiant shore ?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more ?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs ? ”

—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies ?
Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange, bright birds on their starry wings
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things ? ”

—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand ?
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land ? ”

—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy !
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy ;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there ;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds, and beyond the tomb,

—It is there, it is there, my child ! ”

MRS. HEMANS.

JUNE 23.

But one thing is needful.—MATTHEW x. 42.

All the wants which disturb human life, which make us uneasy to ourselves, quarrelsome with others, and unthankful to God; which weary us in vain labours and foolish anxieties; which carry us from project to project, from place to place, in a poor pursuit of we know not what, are the wants which neither God, nor nature, nor reason, hath subjected us to, but are solely infused into us by pride, covetousness, and envy. So far, therefore, as you reduce your desires to such things as nature and reason require; so far as you regulate all the motions of your heart by the strict rules of religion; so far you remove yourself from that infinity of wants and vexations, which torment every heart that is left to itself.—LAW.

*ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DAY.***JUNE 24.**

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.—MATTHEW iii. 1.

A soul lost in the greatness of eternal truths, like that of John the Baptist, may well have risen to an indifference to the comforts, or even ordinary wants, of the body, otherwise almost impossible. We have no record of his daily life; but that of one who, in saintliness of spirit, trod in his steps, is still preserved. Saint Anthony, in the deserts of Egypt,

was wont to pass whole nights in prayer; and that not once, but often, to the astonishment of men. He ate once a day, after the setting of the sun; his food was bread with salt, his drink nothing but water. Flesh and wine he never tasted; when he slept he was content with a rush mat, but mostly he lay on the bare ground. He would not anoint himself with oil, saying that it was more fit for young men to be earnest in subduing the body than to seek things which softened it. Forgetting the past, he, daily, as if beginning afresh, took more pains to improve, saying over to himself continually the Apostle's words, "Forgetting what is behind; stretching forth to what is before;" and mindful, too, of Elijah's saying, "The Lord liveth before whom I stand." He said in himself, that the ascetic ought always to be learning his own life from that of the great Elias, as from a mirror. The picture may not suit in some particulars, but as a glimpse of the mortified life of the desert, in its best aspect, it may serve to realize that of John in the loneliness of the rough wilderness of Judæa.—
GEIKIE.

JUNE 25.

The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.

1 PETER ii. 24.

There is indeed a great deal of seeming difference betwixt the outward conditions of life amongst men. Shall the rich and honourable, and beautiful and wealthy, go in together, under the same name,

with the baser and unhappier part, the poor, wretched sort of the world, who seem to be born for nothing but sufferings and miseries? At least, hath the wise no advantage beyond the fools? Is all grass? Make you no distinction? *No! All is grass*; or, if you will have some other name, this is all you can have—it is but *the flower* of that same grass: somewhat above the common grass in gayness; a little comelier, and better apparelled than it, but partaker of its frail and falling nature. All those higher advantages, which have somewhat of truer and more lasting beauty in them,—the endowments of wit, and learning, and eloquence, yea, and of moral goodness and virtue,—yet they cannot rise above this word; they are still, in all their glory, but the flower of grass; their root is in this earth. Natural ornaments are of some use in this present life, but they reach no further. When men have wasted their strength, and endured the toil of study night and day, it is but a small parcel of knowledge they can attain to, and they are forced to lie down in the dust in the midst of their pursuit of it; that head that lodges most sciences shall within a while be disfurnished of them all; and the tongue that speaks most languages be silenced. The great projects of kings and princes come under this same notion; all the vast designs that are framing in their heads fall to the ground in a moment. “They return to their dust, and in that day all their thoughts perish.”—LEIGHTON.

JUNE 26.

Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

PSALM xcvi. 11.

Natural men may know very much in natural things, and, it may be, may know much in supernatural things after a natural manner. They may be full of school divinity, and may be able to discourse of God and His Son Christ, and the mystery of redemption, etc., and yet they want this peculiar light, by which Christ is made known to believers. They may speak of Him, but it is in the dark; they see Him not, therefore they love Him not. Whereas a soul that hath some of this light—God's peculiar light—communicated to it, sees Jesus Christ, and loves and delights in Him, and walks with Him. A little of this light is worth a great deal, yea, more worth than all that other common speculation and discoursing knowledge that the greatest doctors can attain unto. It is of a more excellent kind and original; it is from heaven, and you know that one beam of the sun is of more worth than the light of ten thousand torches together. Let us not therefore think it incredible that a poor unlettered Christian may know more of God, in the best kind of knowledge, than the wisest and most learned natural man can do; for the one knows God only by man's light, the other knows Him by His own light, and that is the only right knowledge. As the sun cannot be seen but by its own light, so neither can God be savingly known, but by His own revealing.—LEIGHTON.

JUNE 27.

God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.—1 CORINTHIANS i. 27.

As human forms pass before our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, although He is constantly relieving human want and pain, it is plain that the outward man means for Him, relatively, almost nothing, and that His eye rests persistently, almost exclusively, on the man within. As we accompany Him in that brief but exhaustive study of humanity, we feel before the centurion or Pilate little or nothing of the majesty of the Roman name. Although Christ appeared when the empire of the Cæsars was in its splendour, He speaks of the kings of the Gentiles in a phrase of studied vagueness; as if to suggest the utter insignificance of the highest political interests which touch only man's outward life, when they are contrasted with those higher interests of the human spirit which He had come to promote. Even the greatness and authority of the successors of Aaron disappears in the atmosphere of this exacting estimate, which knows no respect of persons; while on the other hand, at His bidding, a few obscure and illiterate Galilean peasants become respectively a St. Peter, a St. John, a St. Mary Magdalene.—LIDDON.

JUNE 28.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands.—

PSALM viii. 6.

Certainly, revelation has familiarized Christians with the angels as supramundane beings, in a very high degree capable of religion. But religion, as it comes before us on the surface of this planet, is a monopoly of man. Among the lower creatures we find nothing like it, we can discover no place for it. Man is the highest being of which these creatures have cognizance. Often, indeed, may we discover, in their attachment to ourselves, in their fidelity and their tenderness, much that rebukes us when we reflect on the poor service that we ourselves pay to a higher Master. But, having no unseen world open to them, and being, as they are, incapable of any properly reflective thought, they are also incapable of religion, of any consciously personal relationship to the Source of all life. Man, however, can look above and beyond this world of sense; he can enter into real communion with the Monarch of both worlds; and the secret of his doing this lies in that which, by virtue of God's bountiful gift and appointment, he himself is: it lies in the characteristic which separates utterly from the creatures around him.—LIDDON.

JUNE 29.

A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.
1 PETER iii. iv.

Hearts good and true
Have wishes few,
In narrow circles bounded;
And he who lives
On what God gives
Hath Christian hope well founded.

Small things are best ;
Grief and unrest
With rank and wealth are given ;
But little things,
On little wings,
Bear little souls to heaven.

FABER.

JUNE 30.

We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

Nor may we forget a hymn, which in God's good providence has been endeared to all of us from childhood. In its present form, the *Te Deum* is clearly Western, whether it belongs to the age of St. Augustine, with whose baptism it is connected by popular tradition, or to a later period. But we can scarcely doubt that portions of it are of Eastern origin, and carry us up well-nigh to the sub-apostolic period. The *Te Deum* is at once a song of praise, a creed, and a supplication. In each capacity it is addressed to our Lord. In the *Te Deum* how profound is the adoration offered to Jesus ; whether as One of most Holy Three, or more specially in His personal distinctness, as the King of Glory, the

Father's everlasting Son! How touching are the supplications which remind Him that, when He became incarnate, He did not abhor the Virgin's womb; that, when His death-agony was passed, He "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers!" How passionate are the pleadings that He would "help His servants, whom He has redeemed with His most precious blood;" that He would "make them to be numbered with His saints, in glory everlasting!" Much of this language is of the highest antiquity; all of it is redolent with the fragrance of the earliest Church; and as we English Christians use it still in our daily services, we may rejoice to feel that it unites us altogether in spirit, and to a great extent in the letter, with the Christians of the three first centuries.—LIDDON.

JULY 1.

As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul
after Thee, O God.—PSALM xlii. 1.

In Thee, dear Lord, my pensive soul respire;
Thou art the fulness of my choice desires.
Thou art that sacred spring whose waters burst
In streams to him that seeks with holy thirst;
Thrice happy man, thrice happy thirst, to bring
Thy fainting soul to so, so sweet a spring;
Thrice happy he whose well-resolved breast
Expects no other aid, no other rest;
Thrice happy he whose downy age hath been
Reclaimed by scourges from the prime of sin:
And, early seasoned with the taste of truth,
Remembers his Creator in his youth.

QUARLES.

JULY 2.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind.—1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 4.

When Abraham sate at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he spied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but, observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent. When the old man was gone, God called to him and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee." God answered him, "I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonoured Me; and couldst not thou endure him for one night, though he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go and do thou likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.—LEGEND.

JULY 3.

Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious. .

1 PETER ii. 6.

Inestimably precious, by all the conditions that can give worth to any; by rareness, and by inward excellency, and by useful virtues. Rare He is, without doubt; there is not such a person in the world again; therefore He is called Wonderful—full of wonders; the power of God and the frailty of man dwelling together in His person. His excellency appears in the same things, in that He is the Lord of life. The sparkling brightness of this Precious Stone is no less than this, that He is the “brightness of the Father’s glory.” So bright, that men could not have beheld Him appearing in Himself; therefore, He veiled it with our flesh. Men tell of strange virtues of some stones; but it is certain that this Precious Stone hath not only virtue to heal the sick, but even to raise the dead. Dead bodies He raised in the days of His abode on earth, and dead souls He still doth raise by the power of His word. The prophet Malachi calls Him the Sun of Righteousness; He is singular, as there is but one sun in the world. So but one Saviour. His lustre is such a stone, as outshines the sun in its fullest brightness. But His work is unspeakable, and remains infinitely beyond all resemblances.—
LEIGHTON.

JULY 4.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him.

PSALM xxxvii. 5.

The children of God, if they rightly take their Father's mind, are always disburdened of perplexing carefulness, but never exempted from diligent watchfulness. Thus we find here they are allowed, nay, enjoined, to cast all their care upon their wise and loving Father, and are secured by His care. He takes it well that they lay all over on Him. He hath provided a sweet quiet life for them, could they improve and use it; a calm and firm condition in all the storms and troubles that are about them; however things go, to find content, and be *careful for nothing*. . . . *Cast your care upon Him*, not that you may be the more free to take your own pleasure and slothful ease, but, on the contrary, that you may be the more active and apt to watch. Being freed from the burden of vexing carefulness, which would press and encumber you, you are the more active, as one eased of a load, to walk, and work, and watch, as becomes a Christian.—LEIGHTON.

JULY 5.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.—EPHESIANS vi. 11.

And now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, and passeth all the rest in doing his

office? I can tell you, for I know him who he is: I know him well. But now, methinks, I see you hearkening and listening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the others, and is the most diligent preacher and prelate in all England. And will ye know who it is? It is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied: he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way, call for him when ye will; he is ever at home, the most diligent preacher in all the realm. He is ever at his plough; no lording or loitering may hinder him: he is ever applying to his business; ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry.
—LATIMER.

JULY 6.

Cleave to that which is good.—ROMANS xii. 9.

This expresses a vehement and inseparable affection; loving and rejoicing in all the good thou seest in others; desiring and seeking after all the good thou canst attain unto thyself; and being more pleased with the society of goodly persons than of any other, such as will put thee and keep thee most in mind of thy home and the way thither, and admonish and redeem thee from any declining steps. Their reproofs are more dear to thee than the laughter

and flattery of profane men: as one said to his master, "Thou shalt find no staff hard enough to beat me from thee." Though they seem harsh to thee, yet wilt thou say, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be kindness." And no opposition will drive thee from the truth of God and His ways, which are only good, if thy heart be once glued by love and fastened to them. The word that is used in marriage, of the husband cleaving to the wife, holds true in the soul once married to that which is good; all violence will be too weak to sever thee. Learn to know what this is that is truly *good*, to know the excellency and sweetness of holiness, and it will be impossible to part thy affection from it.—
LEIGHTON.

JULY 7.

If any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.

JAMES iii. 2.

In all the disorders of the world, the tongue hath a great share. To let pass those irruptions of infernal furies, blasphemies and cursings, lying and uncharitable speeches, how much have we to account for unprofitable talking! It is a lamentable thing, that there is nothing, for the most part, in common entertainments and societies of men together, but refuse and trash; as if their tongues were given them for no other end than to be their shame, by discovering their folly and weakness! So, likewise, that of impatient speech in trouble and affliction, which certainly springs from an unmortified spirit,

that hath learned nothing of that great lesson of submission to the will of God. But for all the disorders of the tongue, the remedy must begin at the heart. Purge the fountain, and then the stream will be clean. It is a great help in the quality of speech, to abate in the quantity; not to speak rashly, but to ponder what we are going to say. "Set a watch before the door of thy lips." The psalmist bids us not build it up like a stone wall, that nothing may go in or come out; but he speaks of a door, which may be sometimes open, oftentimes shut, but withal to have a watch standing before it continually. A Christian must labour to have his speech as contracted as can be in the things of this earth, and even in divine things our words should be few and wary. In speaking of the greatest things, it is a great point of wisdom not to speak much.—LEIGHTON.

JULY 8.

God dealeth with you as with sons.—HEBREWS xii. 7.

Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us. The schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us round
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays;—sorrow dogging sin,
Afflictions sorted—anguish of all sizes—
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in;
Bibles lay open, millions of surprises;
Blessings beforehand; ties of gratefulness;
The sound of glory ringing in our ears;
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and graces, eternal hopes and fears,

HERBERT.

JULY 9.

Help, I pray Thee, O Christ; have pity. Preserve my soul, guard my spirit. Grant me power of endurance.

As the soul draws nigh to the gate of death, the solemnities of the eternal future are wont to cast their shadows upon the thought and heart, and whatever is deepest, truest, most assured, and precious, thenceforth engrosses every power. At that dread, yet blessed hour, the soul clings with a new intensity and deliberation to the most certain truths, to the most prized and familiar words. To gaze upon the naked truth is the one necessity; to plant the feet upon the Rock Itself, the supreme desire, in that awful, searching, sifting moment. Often, too, at a man's last hour will habit strangely assert its mysterious power of recovering, as if from the grave, thoughts and memories which seem to have been lost for ever. Truths which have been half forgotten or quite forgotten since childhood, and prayers which were learned at a mother's knee, return upon the soul with resistless persuasiveness and force, while the accumulations of later years disappear and are lost sight of. Depend upon it, the martyrs prayed to Jesus in their agony, because they had prayed to Him long before, many of them from childhood. They had been taught to pray to Him; they had been taunted and ridiculed for praying to Him; they had persevered in praying to Him; and when at last their hour of trial and of glory came, they had recourse to the prayers which

they knew full well to be the secret of their strength ; and those prayers carried them on through their agony to the crown beyond it.—LIDDON.

JULY 10.

But ye are a chosen generation, . . . a peculiar people.

1 PETER ii. 9.

The peculiarity of the Hebrew civilization did not consist in the cultivation of the imagination and intellect, like that of the Greeks, nor in the organization of government, like that of Rome, but its distinguishing feature was *Religion*. To say nothing of the Scriptures, the prophets, the miracles of the Jews, their frequent festivals, their constant sacrifices—everything in their collective and private life was connected with a revealed religion ; their wars, their heroes, their poetry, had a sacred character ; their national code was full of the details of their public worship, their ordinary employments were touched at every point by divinely appointed and significant ceremonies. Nor was their religion, as were the religions of the heathen world, a creed which could not be the common property of the instructed and the ignorant. The religion of Moses was for the use of all and the benefit of all. The poorest peasant of Galilee had the same part in it as the wisest Rabbi of Jerusalem. The children of all families were taught to claim their share in the privileges of the chosen people.—CONYBEARE AND HOWSON.

JULY 11.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.—NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

This prayer was not in this case, and is not necessarily, a good man's prayer. Balaam was essentially a bad man when he uttered it. He virtually put off his personal acquaintance with righteousness as long as he could—as many others do,—till his last end. He could look with complacency upon the prospect of long years to come ; live, as he was now living, in knowledge of the truth, but in pursuit of falsehood and wilfulness, and delude himself with the fallacious hope that somehow or other, by a happy accident, by a natural chance, everything would be right at the *last*. This hope proved fallacious. He was not permitted to curse Israel, but he did what he could: he induced the Israelites to commit fornication ; and he perished in fighting against Israel, in the war with Midian. This was Balaam's righteous death ; this was what came from putting off that righteous life, which is the only sure preparation for a righteous death. There is no security in the wish to die holily if we have not the present consciousness of living obediently.—LEATHES.

JULY 12.

Through Thy commandments I get understanding.—

PSALM cxix. 104.

The great, fine, and useful books of Homer and Virgil, and the like *ancient* books, they are nothing when compared with the Bible; for the books of the heathen teach nought of faith, and hope, and love. They regard only present things, which we can feel, and which we can grasp, and comprehend with our reason. But there is nothing in them about trusting and hoping in God. Such matters we must look for in the Psalms, and the Book of Job, which both treat of faith, hope, patience, and prayer. In short, the Holy Scripture is the highest and best book of God; full of comfort in all tribulation, for it teaches concerning faith, hope, and love many more things than mere reason can see, feel, comprehend, and experience; and when we are in trouble, it teaches us how these virtues should shine forth, and that there is another eternal life above this poor and wretched one.—
LUTHER.

JULY 13.

Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

These sons are heirs, but all this lifetime is their minority. Yet, even now, being partakers of this new birth and sonship, they have a right to it, and

in the assurance of that right a living hope; as an heir, when he is capable of those thoughts, hath not only right of inheritance, but may rejoice in the hope he hath of it, and please himself in thinking of it. But hope is said to be only respect of an uncertain good. True; in the world's phrase it is so; for *their* hope is conversant in uncertain things; all their worldly hopes are tottering, built upon sand; and their hopes of heaven are but blind and uncertain conjectures. But the hope of the sons of the living God is a living hope—living in death itself. The world dare say no more for its device than *Dum spiro, spero*; but the children of God can add, by virtue of this living hope, *Dum exspiro, spero*. It is a fearful thing when a man and all his hopes die together. But the "righteous hath hope in his death." Death, which cuts the sinews of all other hopes, and turns them out of all other inheritances, alone fulfils this hope, and ends it in fruition; as a messenger sent to bring the children of God home to the possession of their inheritance.—LEIGHTON.

JULY 14.

Be sober, and watch unto prayer.—1 PETER iv. 7.

The Captain of our salvation will not own them for His followers who lie down to drink of these waters, namely, fleshly and perishing delights, but only such as in passing take of them with their hand. As excessive eating and drinking both makes the body sickly and lazy, fit for nothing but sleep,

and besots the mind ; thus doth all immoderate use of the world and its delights wrong the soul in its spiritual condition, makes it sickly and feeble, full of spiritual distempers and inactivity, benumbs the graces of the spirit. Therefore, if you would be spiritual, healthful, and vigorous, and enjoy much of the consolations of heaven, be sparing and sober in those of the earth, and what you abate of the one shall certainly be made up of the other. Health, with a good constitution of body, is a more constant, permanent pleasure, than that of excess, and a momentary pleasing of the palate ; thus the comfort of this hope is a more refined and more abiding contentment than any that is to be found in the passing enjoyments of this world ; and it is a foolish bargain to exchange a drachma of the one for many pounds of the other. Consider how pressingly the apostle St. Paul reasons : " And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things ; " and take withal our Saviour's exhortation : " Be sober and watch, for ye know not at what hour your Lord will come. " —LEIGHTON.

JULY 15.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS vi. 23.

" He is not dead," but only lieth sleeping
In the sweet refuge of his Master's breast ;
And far away from sorrow, toil, and weeping,
" He is not dead," but only taking rest.

What, though the highest hopes he dearly cherished
All faded gently as the setting sun ;
What though our own fond expectations perished,
Ere yet life's noblest labour seemed begun ;

What though he standeth at no earthly altar,—
Yet in white raiment, on the golden floor,
Where love is perfect, and no step can falter,
He serveth as a priest for evermore.

O glorious end of life's short day of sadness !
O blessed course so well and nobly run !
O home of true and everlasting gladness ;
O crown unfading, and so early won !

Though tears will fall, we bless Thee, O our Father,
For the dear one for ever with the blest,
And wait the Easter dawn when Thou shalt gather
Thine own, long parted, to their endless rest.

JULY 16.

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.—JOHN xvi. 23.

Prayer is then so noble, because it is the work of man as man ; of man realizing his being and destiny with a vividness which is necessary to him in no other occupation. But what shall we say of it, when we reflect further that in prayer man holds converse with God ; that the Being of beings, with all His majestic attributes, filling and transcending the created universe, traversing human history, traversing each man's own individual history, is before him ; that although man is dust and ashes, he is, by prayer, already welcomed in the very courts of heaven ? Whatever be the daily occupations of

any in this church, be he a worker with the hands or a worker with the brain, be he gentle or simple, be he unlettered or educated, be he high in the state or among the millions at its base, is it not certain that the nobleness of his highest forms of labour must fall infinitely below that of any single human spirit, entering consciously into converse with the Infinite and Eternal God?—LIDDON.

JULY 17.

I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain.—REVELATION v. 6.

Around Him are three concentric circles of adoration. The inmost proceeds from the four mysterious creatures, and the four and twenty elders who "have harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints." These are the courtiers, who are placed on the very steps of the throne. Around these, at a greater distance from the Most High, there is a countless company of worshippers. "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the creatures and the elders," etc. Beyond these, again, the entranced apostle discerns a third sphere, in which is maintained a perpetual adoration. Lying outside the two inner circles of conscious adoration offered by the heavenly intelligences, there is in St. John's vision an assemblage of all created life, which, whether it wills or not, lives for Christ's as for the Father's glory. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and

under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." This is the hymn of the whole visible creation, and to it the response comes from the inmost circle of the worshippers, ratifying and harmonizing this adoring movement of universal life. "And the four creatures said, Amen." Nor does the redeemed Church on earth fail to bear her part in this chorus of praise. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—LIDDON.

JULY 18.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual kingdom.

1 PETER ii. 5.

Consider this as your happiness, to form part of this building, and consider the unsolidness of other comforts and privileges. If some have called those stones happy which were taken for the building of temples or altars, beyond those in common houses, how true is it here! Happy, indeed, the stones which God chooses to be living stones in this spiritual temple, though they be hammered and hewed, to be polished for it by affliction and the inward work of mortification and repentance. It is worth the enduring of all to be fitted for this building. Happy they, beyond all the rest of men,

though they be set in never so great honours, as prime parts of politic buildings, in the courts of kings, yea, or kings themselves! For all other buildings, and all the parts of them, shall be demolished and come to nothing, from the foundation to the cope stone; all your houses, both cottages and palaces; the "elements shall melt away, and the earth, with all the works in it, shall be consumed." But this spiritual kingdom shall grow up to heaven, and, being come to perfection, shall abide for ever in perfection of beauty and glory. In it shall be found no unclean thing, nor unclean person, but only they that are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.—LEIGHTON.

JULY 19.

Before I was troubled, I went wrong.—PSALM cxix. 67.

As we cannot be happy except in the enjoyment of God, so we cannot rival or rob one another of this happiness. And as to other things, the enjoyments and prosperities of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to the happiness, and, generally speaking, so contrary to that they appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or spite, or hatred. How silly would it be to envy a man that was drinking poison out of a golden cup! and yet who can say that he is acting wiser than thus when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness? How many saints has adversity sent to heaven, and how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into ever-

lasting misery ! One man succeeds in everything, and so loses all ; another meets with nothing but crosses and disappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.—LAW.

JULY 20.

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing : but contrariwise blessing.—1 PETER iii. 9.

If in any little difference or misunderstanding that you happened to have at any time with a relation, or a neighbour, or any one else, you should then pray for them in a more extraordinary manner than you ever did before, beseeching God to give them every grace and blessing and happiness you can think of, you would have taken the speediest method that can be of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven ; stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good will to him who had so high a place in your secret prayers. You cannot possibly have any ill-temper, or show any unkind behaviour to a man, for whose welfare you are so much concerned as to be his advocate with God in private. This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion ; it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions, and be the best arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintances.—LAW.

JULY 21.

New mercies each returning day
Hover around us when we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

KEBLE.

As the morning is to you the beginning of a new life, as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper that your first devotions should be a praise and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you should offer and devote body and soul, all that you are, and all that you have, to His service and glory. Receive, therefore, every day as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every rising sun with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen it and all things new created upon your account; and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.—LAW.

JULY 22.

I saw vanity under the sun.—ECCLESIASTES iv. 7.

False world, thou liest : thou canst not lend
The least delight :
Thy favours cannot gain a friend,
They are so slight :
Thy morning pleasures make an end
To please at night :
Poor are the wants that thou suppliest ;
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou viest
With heaven : fond earth, thou boast'st ;
False world, thou liest.

N

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales
Of endless treasure :
Thy bounty offers easy sales
Of lasting pleasure :
Thou ask'st the conscience what she ails,
And swear'st to ease her.
There's none can want where thou suppliest ;
There's none can give where thou deniest ;
Alas ! fond world, thou boast'st ;
False world, thou liest.

QUARLES.

JULY 23.

His delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in His law will he exercise himself day and night.—PSALM i. 2.

Devotion is nothing else but right apprehensions and right affections towards God. All practices, therefore, that heighten and improve our true apprehensions of God, all ways of life that tend to nourish, and raise, and fix our affections upon Him, are to be reckoned so many helps and means to fill us with devotion. As prayer is the proper fuel of this holy flame, so we must use all our care and continuance to give prayer its full power ; as by alms, self-denial, frequent retirements, and holy reading ; composing forms for ourselves, or using the best we can get ; adding length of time, and observing hours of prayer ; changing, improving, and suiting our devotions to the condition of our lives and the state of our hearts. Those who have most leisure seem more eminently called to a special observance of these holy rules of a devout live. And they who by the necessity of their state, and

not through their own choice, have but little time to employ thus, must make the best use of that little they have. And this is the certain way of making devotion produce a devout life.—LAW.

JULY 24.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.—1 PETER ii. 9.

There is no doubt but that this kingly priesthood is the common dignity of all believers. "This honour hath all the saints;" they are kings, have victory and dominion given them over all the powers of darkness, and the lusts of their own hearts, that held them captive and domineered over them before. Base, slavish lusts not born to command, yet are the hard taskmasters of unrenewed minds; and there is no true subduing of them but by the power and spirit of Christ. They may be quiet for a while in the natural man, but they are then but asleep; as soon as they wake again, they return, to hurry and drive him with their wonted violence. Now this is the benefit of receiving the kingdom of Christ into a man's heart, that it makes him a king himself. All the subjects of Christ are kings, not only in regard of that pure crown of gold they hope for, and shall certainly attain, but in the present they have a kingdom, which is the pledge of that other, overcoming the world and Satan and themselves, by the power of faith. There is not any kind of spirit in the world so noble as that spirit that is in a Christian, the very spirit of Jesus

Christ, that great King, the spirit of glory. This is a sure way to ennoble the basest and poorest among us. This royalty takes away all attainders and leaves nothing of all that is past to be laid to our charge, or to dishonour us.—LEIGHTON.

ST. JAMES'S DAY.

JULY 25.

And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
ACTS xii. 2.

Ye servants of a martyred Lord,
His martyrs' toils and praise record ;
The palms and crowns that never fade,
Which God in store for them hath laid.

Long tossed upon the stormy tide,
With Christ their Leader and their Guide,
Baptized in blood, they homeward passed,
And in still waters rest at last.

O Saviour, may our portion be
With those who gave themselves to Thee ;
Throughout eternity to sing
High praise to Thee, the martyrs' King.

As soldiers, Lord, of Thy dear Cross,
Prepare our souls for pain and loss ;
On Thy right arm make us confide,
And gladly die for Him who died.

JULY 26.

Rather in all things to be resigned than blest.

KEBLE.

If this is the case of every man in the world, that he is blessed with some particular state most convenient for him, how reasonable it is for every man to will that which God has already willed for him; and by a pious faith and trust in the Divine goodness, thankfully adore and magnify that wise Providence, which he is sure has made the best choice for him of those things which he could not choose for himself. But if you give yourself up to uneasiness, or complain at anything in your state, you may, for aught you know, be so ungrateful to God as to murmur at that very thing which is to prove the cause of your salvation. Had you it in your power to get that which you think is so grievous to want, it might perhaps be that very thing, which of all others, would most expose you to eternal damnation. Let us, therefore, have no will but that of God's, and desire nothing for ourselves but that which the good providence of God appoints us.—LAW.

JULY 27.

Every day will I give thanks unto Thee.—PSALM cxlvi. 2.

Sometimes imagine to yourself that you saw holy David with his hands upon his harp, and his eyes fixed upon heaven, calling in transport upon all the creation, sun and moon, light and darkness, day and

night, men and angels, to join with his rapturous soul in praising the Lord of Heaven. Dwell upon this imagination till you think you are singing with this divine musician, and let such a companion teach you to exalt your heart unto God in the following psalm, which you may use constantly first in the morning, "I will magnify Thee, O God, my King; and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever," etc. (Psalm cxlv.). These following psalms, as the 34th, 96th, 103rd, 111th, 146th, are such as wonderfully set forth the glory of God, and therefore you may keep to any one of them, at any particular hour, as you like.—LAW.

JULY 28.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.—MATTHEW vi. 3.

The rule of forgiving is also the rule of giving: you are not to give, or do good to seven, but to seventy times seven. You are not to cease from giving, because you have given often to the same person or to other persons, but must look upon yourself as much obliged to continue relieving those that continue in want as you were obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power you had been excused from relieving any person once; but, if it is in your power to relieve people often, it is your duty to do it often. He that is not ready to give to every brother that wants to have something given him, does not give like a disciple

of Christ. And the reason of this is very plain, because there is the same excellency, the same goodness, and the same necessity of being thus charitable at one time as at another. It is as much the best use of our money, to be always doing good with it, as it is the best use of it at any particular time; so that that which is a reason for a charitable action, is as good a reason for a charitable life.—LAW.

JULY 29.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

PSALM xix. 8.

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him, in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.

COWPER.

JULY 30.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 PETER iii. 18.

It is an excellent life, and it is the proper life of a Christian, to be daily outstripping himself, to be daily spiritually wiser, holier, more heavenly-minded to-day than yesterday, and to-morrow (if it be added to his life) than to-day. Every day loving the world less, and Christ more, than on the former, and gaining every day some further victory over his secret corruptions; having his passions more subdued and mortified, his desires in all temporal things more cool and indifferent, and in spiritual things more ardent; that miserable lightness of spirit cured, and his heart rendered more solid and fixed upon God, aspiring to more near communion with Him. Oh! this were a worthy ambition indeed! You would have your estates growing, and your credit growing: how much rather should you seek to have your graces growing, and not be content with anything you have attained to! But all our endeavours and diligence in this will be in vain, unless we look for our perfecting and establishing from that *right hand*, without which we can do nothing. Thither the apostle moves his desires for his brethren, and so teaches them the same address for themselves. "The God of all grace make you perfect."—LEIGHTON.

JULY 31.

Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this . . . be told for a memorial of her.—

MATTHEW xxvi. 13.

It was, in fact, an instance of kindness and love exhibited in little things, and it is these acts of kindness which are invaluable. They manifest far more plainly than greater deeds the sympathy, the sincerity, the intrinsic and genuine kindness of the person who confers them. No one can do a great and conspicuous act of kindness without, to a certain extent, benefiting himself as well as the person to whom he does it. There follows him the glory and the lustre of his action. But little deeds of kindness in themselves worth little, become virtually priceless because of the feeling, and the thoughtfulness, and the warmth of affection which they are signs of, and because of the small reflex of glory which accompanies them.—STANLEY LEATHES.

AUGUST 1.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

MATTHEW v. 4.

Sad is our youth, for it is ever going,
Crumbling away beneath our very feet ;
Sad is our life, for it is ever flowing
In current unperceived, because so fleet ;
Sad are our hopes, for they were sweet in sowing,
But tares self-sown have overtopped the wheat ;
Sad are our joys, for they were sweet in blowing—
And still—oh, still—their dying breath is sweet.

And sweet is youth, although it has bereft us
Of that which made our childhood sweeter still;
And sweet is middle life, for it hath left us
A newer good to cure an older ill:
And sweet are all things, when we learn to prize them,
Not for their sake but His, who grants them or denies them.
AUBREY DE VERE.

AUGUST 2.

The Lord is gracious and merciful: long-suffering, and of great goodness.—PSALM cxlv. 8.

The Lord is gracious, or of a bountiful kind disposition. The words *good* and *gracious* both signify a benignity and kindness of nature. It is given as love's attributes that it is kind, ever compassionate, and helpful as it can be in straits and distresses, still ready to forget and to pass by evil, and to do good. In the largest and most comprehensive sense must we take the expression here, and yet still shall we speak and think infinitely below what His goodness is. He is naturally good, yea, goodness is His nature; He is goodness itself. He is primitively good; all goodness is derived from Him, and all that is in the creature comes forth from no other than that ocean; and this graciousness is still larger than them all. But the goodness that the gospel is full of, the particular stream that runs in that channel, is His peculiar graciousness and love that He bears to His own children, that by which they are first enlivened, and then refreshed and sustained in their spiritual being. No friend is so kind and friendly, and none so powerful. He is

ever ready to be found, and His presence is always comfortable. They that know God ever find Him a real useful good.—LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 3.

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.—1 PETER ii. 17.

This is a precious cluster of Divine precepts. The whole face of the heavens is adorned with stars, but they are of different magnitudes, and in some parts they are thicker set than in others: thus it is likewise in the Holy Scriptures. These are the two books that the Psalmist sets open before us (Psalm xix.); the heavens as a choice piece of the works of God, instructing us, and the Word of God, more full and clear than they. Here is a constellation of very bright stars, near together. These words have very briefly and yet not obscured by briefness, but withal very plainly, the sum of our duty towards God and man; to men both in general—"Honour all men"—and in special relations: in their Christian or religious relation—"Serve the brotherhood;" and in a chief civil relation—"Honour the king." And our whole duty to God, comprised under the name of *His fear*, is set in the middle betwixt these, as the common spring of all duty to man. How plain and easy, and how few are those things that are the rule of our life!—no dark sentences to puzzle the understanding, nor large discourses and long periods to burden the memory: they are all plain; there is nothing wreathed nor distorted in them.—LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 4.

The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.—GENESIS xlvii. 9.

If a man had five fixed years to live, he could not possibly think at all without intending to make the best use of them all. When he saw his stay so short in this world, he must needs think that this was not a world for him; and when he saw how near he was to another world that was eternal, he must surely think it very necessary to be very diligent in preparing himself for it. But who but a madman can reckon that he has five years certain to come? And if it be reasonable and necessary to deny our worldly tempers, and live wholly unto God because we are *certain* that we are to die at the end of five years, surely it must be much more reasonable and necessary for us to live in the same spirit, because we have no certainty that we shall live five weeks. Again, if we were to add twenty years to the five, which is in all probability more than will be added to the lives of many people who are at man's estate, what a poor thing is this! How small a difference is there between five and twenty-five years! Now, as we are all created to be eternal, to live in an endless succession of ages upon ages, what a trifle therefore must the years of a man's age appear when they are set against eternity!—LAW.

AUGUST 5.

With the lowly there is wisdom.—PROVERBS xi. 2.

Let any one but look back upon his own life, and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it: what foolish passions, what vain thoughts, what needless labours, what extravagant projects, have taken up the greatest part of his life; how foolish he has been in his words and conversation; how seldom he has done good with judgment, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by accident; how seldom he has been able to please himself, and how often he has displeased others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he loved, and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and transported at trifles, pleased and displeased with the very same things, and constantly changing from one vanity to another;—let but a man take this view of his own life, and he will see reason enough to confess that pride was not made for man.—LAW.

AUGUST 6.

Give me what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt.

Justly may we admire the force and the speed with which prayer flies up to heaven, and brings down answers from thence: “no sooner said than done;” if not as to the accomplishment of the thing itself, which perhaps may be more opportune in

some future hour, yet, at least, in clear firm hope, and strong confidence, sent from above into a praying soul. Prayer soars above the impiety and violence of men, and with a swift wing commits itself to Heaven. Fervent prayers stretch forth a strong, wide-extended wing, and while the birds of night hover beneath, they mount aloft and point out, as it were, the proper seats to which we should aspire. For certainly there is nothing that cuts the air so swiftly, nothing that takes so sublime, so happy, so auspicious a flight as prayer, which bears the soul on its pinions, and leaves far behind all the dangers, and even the delights of this low world of ours. But he who has not been accustomed to prayer when the pleasant gales of prosperity have been breathing upon him, will have little skill and confidence in applying himself to it when the storms of adversity arise.—LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 7.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

MATTHEW xxvi. 41.

When you read the Scriptures, you see a religion that is all *life*, and *spirit*, and *joy* in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires, and bodily indulgences, to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see Christians represented as temples of the Holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins, that have their lamps

always burning, in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers. When you look into the writings and lives of the first Christians, you see the same spirit that you see in the Scriptures. All is reality, life, and action. Watching and prayers, self-denial and mortification, was the common business of their lives. This is the only royal way that leads to a kingdom.—LAW.

AUGUST 8.

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Give me the heart to pray, give me the power,
When I kneel down to Thee, hour by hour ;
Guilty and soul-stricken, weary and weak,
Give me the life to feel words that I speak.

Let not my spirit lie silent and cold,
Dead as the body is under the mould;
Let me not kneel to Thee, braving Thy power,
Mocking Thy presence here, hour by hour.

Breathe on my spirit now, deadened in sin,
Rend the thick covering, let the light in.
Wake up my soul to Thee, that I may live ;
All that I ask of Thee, Lord, Thou canst give.
Give me the heart to pray, give me the power,
When I kneel down to Thee, hour by hour.

DANON.

AUGUST 9.

Abhor that which is evil.—ROMANS xii. 9.

Sin possesses the power of concealing both its own deformity and its danger. There is indeed this awful peculiarity in sin, that in proportion as men become familiar with it, they become ignorant of its real character.

There are snares laid for us in every path we walk in, and in every step we take; in our meat and drink; in our calling and labour; in our house at home; in our journeying abroad; yea, even in God's house, and in our spiritual exercises, both there, and in private. And meantime "our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!" An alarm to watchfulness is here given, from the watchfulness of our great adversary. Observe here his strength, his diligence, and his cruelty. His strength, a lion; his diligence, going about and seeking; his cruelty, roaring, and seeking to devour.—LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 10.

Were it not better to lie still?
Let Him strike home, and bless the rod.

KEBLE.

Resignation to the Divine will signifies a cheerful approbation, and thankful acceptance of everything that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive, and fully approve of everything that, by the order of God's

providence, happens to us. For there is no reason why we should be patient, but is as good and strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good physician that could not mistake, or do anything to us but what certainly tended to our benefit, it would not be enough to be patient and abstain from murmuring against such a physician, but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him not to be pleased and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him. Now, every murmuring, impatient reflection under the providence of God is an accusation of God, for a complaint always supposes ill usage. Hence you may see the great necessity and piety of this thankful state of heart, founded on this plain belief, that God is a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness.—LAW.

AUGUST 11.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.—
ROMANS xii. 11.

Most of the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all those that are so may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only so far and to such ends as are suitable to beings that are to live above the world all the time that they live in the world. This is the only measure of our application to any worldly business; let it be what it will, when it will, it must have no more of our hearts, or hands, or our time, than is consistent with a hearty, daily, careful pre-

paration of ourselves for another life. For as all Christians, as such, have renounced the world, to prepare themselves, by daily devotion and universal holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments as upon worldly wants and bodily infirmities; things not to be desired, but only to be endured and suffered, till death and the resurrection has carried us to an eternal state of real happiness.—LAW.

AUGUST 12.

Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.—COLOSSIANS iii. 16.

Imagine to yourself that you had been with Moses when he was led through the Red Sea; that you had seen the waters divide themselves, and stand on a heap on both sides; that you had seen them held up till you had passed through, then let fall upon your enemies; do you think that you should have wanted a voice or an ear to have sung with Moses, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation," etc.? I know your own heart tells you, that all people must have been singers on such an occasion. Let this, therefore, teach you that it is the heart that tunes the voice to sing the praises of God; and that if you cannot sing these same words now with joy, it is because you are not so affected with the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ as the Jews were, or you yourself would have been with their deliverance at the Red Sea.—LAW.

AUGUST 13.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—MATTHEW xix. 19.

If religion requires me to love all persons as God's creatures that belong to Him, that bear His image, enjoy His protection, and make parts of His family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world. The sin, therefore, of hating or despising any one man, is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man, is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, and extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compassion, as being in the most pitiable condition that can be. As it was the *sins* of the world that made the Son of God become a compassionate, suffering Advocate for all mankind, so no one is of the spirit of Christ but he that has the utmost compassion for sinners.—LAW.

AUGUST 14.

Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.

1 PETER v. 7.

This is the first thing, indeed, to be looked to, that our desires and cares be brought to a due compass. And what would we have? Think we that contentment lies in so much, and no less? When that is attained, it shall appear as far off as before. When children are at the foot of a high hill, they think it reaches the heavens; and yet, if they were there, they would find themselves as far off as before, or, at least, not sensibly nearer. Men think, Oh, had I this, I were well; and, when it is reached, it is but an advanced standing from which to look higher, and spy out for some other thing. We are, indeed, children in this, to think the good of our estate lies in the greatness, and not in the fitness of it for us. He were a fool that would have his clothes so, and think the bigger and longer they were they would please him the better. And certainly, as in apparel, so in place and state, and in all outward things, their good lies not in their greatness, but in their fitness for us. So, then, I say, all childish, vain, needless cares are to be discharged, and, as being unfit to cast on thy God, are to be quite cast out of thy heart. Entertain no care at all but such as thou mayst put into God's hands—such as He will take off thy hands, and undertake for thee. All needful, lawful care, and that only, will He receive. So, then, rid thyself quite of all thou canst

not take this course with, and then without scruples take confidently this course with all the rest.—
LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 15.

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord.—ISAIAH xli. 14.

O thou of dark forebodings drear,
O thou of such a faithless heart,
Hast thou forgotten what thou art,
That thou hast ventured so to fear?

No weed on ocean's bosom cast,
Borne by its never-resting foam
This way and that, without a home,
Till flung on some bleak shore at last.

But thou the lotus, which above,
Swayed here and there by wind and tide,
Yet still below doth fixed abide,
Fast rooted in the eternal love.

TRENCH.

AUGUST 16.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?—ROMANS vi. 21.

Let the voluptuous person say it out upon his death-bed, what pleasure or profit doth then abide with him of all his former sinful delights. Let him tell if there remain anything of them all, but that which he would gladly not have to remain, the sting of an accusing conscience, which is as lasting as the delight of sin was short and vanishing. Let the covetous and ambitious declare freely, even those of them who have prospered most in their pursuit of

riches and honour, what ease all their possessions or titles do then help them to. Whether their pains are less because their chests are full, or their houses stately, or a multitude of friends and servants waiting on them with hat and knee. And if all these things cannot ease the body, how much less can they quiet the mind! And, therefore, is it not true that all pains in these things, and the uneven ways with which they sometimes stept aside to serve those ends, were vain rollings and tossings up and down, not tending to a certain haven of peace and happiness? It is a lamentable thing to be deluded a whole lifetime with a false dream. The whole course of a man's life out of Christ is nothing but a continual trading in vanity, running a circle of toil and labour, and reaping no profit at all. Therefore they are called "the unfruitful works of darkness."
—LEIGHTON.

AUGUST 17.

Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein is my desire.—PSALM cxix. 35.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul divine and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of

a soul not converted unto God. If any one would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself *to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you*. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you, therefore, work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it heals with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness.—LAW.

AUGUST 18.

For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them?—DEUTERONOMY iv. 8.

Moses taught his countrymen that God had conferred upon them the highest prize which man can conceive, freely and without any merit on their part. When they were bondsmen of Pharaoh, He claimed them as His servants; when they trembled before the powers of the visible world, He showed them that these powers were His instruments, and that He used them for their good; when they fancied that the Ruler of the world was indifferent to them, or hated them, He proved that He was watching over them, and caring for them, even in their meanest condition, though they were not thinking at all of Him. When they supposed that He was capricious, He showed to them the evenness, regularity, equity of His government; when they fancied

He was unmerciful, He declared Himself as the Lord God, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Was this knowledge of the living and unseen God nothing? Moses tells his countrymen that it was everything; this knowledge was the good thing which they had received from the source of all good. To hold it fast was to be a nation, to loose it was to sink back into the condition out of which they had been raised.—MAURICE.

AUGUST 19.

All these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition.—1 CORINTHIANS x. 11.

The history of the journey through the wilderness, and of all other ages of the Jewish commonwealth, is a history of simple events; of migrations and wars; of victories and defeats; of commercial, agricultural, and pastoral prosperity and adversity; of sins of men who were of our flesh and blood; of men who spake right and did right because they were true. What makes this history a Bible, is that all these facts are interpreted. They are shown to be signs. The meaning of a nation's existence is brought home to us. The personal ground of a nation's law is laid bare before us. The maxim of the whole book is that He is the educator of that people, and of all people; that all circumstances are His instruments, that all events are assertions of His presence and His rule; that whatever happens

to men is intended as a means of showing forth to them His righteousness and of moulding them to His image.—**MAURICE.**

AUGUST 20.

And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee.

PSALM ix. 10.

Every one must, I think, have been startled, at some moment of his life, by the wonderful force of the words in Scripture, with which he has been most familiar, and which had seemed to him most commonplace. For instance, the word "trust," which meets us at every turn in the Book of Psalms, —how soon we came to think of it as a kind of catch-phrase, as one which was characteristic of a peculiar people who lived some thousands of years ago in the East! In overwhelming troubles, in a time of utter weariness, when every calculation has been disappointed, when there seems no fair ground for expecting help from any quarter, when all is dark without and within, how has this little word dawned upon a man! what a witness it has seemed to give of a world of light somewhere, perhaps not far off! To be told that he may put his trust in God; that this is not a sin, but a duty; that it has nothing to do with prospects of success; that the command is addressed to those who are in the midst of failure; to learn that such persons have best understood and obeyed the command,—this is strange. What was a commonplace becomes a paradox: to trust because all is in God which he has

not, and feels he has not, this is precisely what he needs, and precisely to this the book which had seemed a dull repetition of unmeaning sounds is inviting him.—MAURICE.

AUGUST 21.

Through Thee will we overcome our enemies.—PSALM xl. 6.

God is with us; the shout of a King is in the midst of us: let us fear Him and give Him glory; then we shall be able to resist all in earth and all in hell, which is striving against Him. In the strength of this assurance we can kneel down and pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth. A hard warfare it is against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; a hard warfare for kings and priests and people. But the Helper and Conqueror is near. God Himself has commanded us to make prayers and supplications for all men. He is on our side and on theirs, whoever may be against us. The secret battle in the closet, the open conflict with the tormentors and destroyers of the earth, is all present to Him. He is engaged in it; He is working in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure, though ten thousand foes in us and around us may be urging us to disobedience. And there is an invisible company about us, in whom His mighty love has worked effectually, who have departed this life in His faith and fear, and are showing forth all that light which they borrow from Him, as suns and stars in glory.—MAURICE.

AUGUST 22.

I will therefore that men pray everywhere.—1 TIMOTHY ii. 8.

Child, amidst the flowers at play,
While the red light fades away ;
Mother, with thine earnest eye
Ever following silently ;
Father, by the breeze of eve
Called thy harvest work to leave—
Pray : ere yet the dark hours be,
Lift the heart, and bend the knee !

Traveller, in the stranger's land,
Far from thine own household band ;
Mourner, haunted by the tone
Of a voice from this world gone ;
Captive, in whose narrow cell
Sunshine hath not leave to dwell ;
Sailor, on the darkening sea—
Lift the heart, and bend the knee !

Warrior, that from battle won,
Breathest now at set of sun ;
Woman, o'er the lowly slain
Weeping on his burial plain ;
Ye that triumph, ye that sigh,
Kindred by one holy tie,
Heaven's first star alike ye see—
Lift the heart, and bend the knee !

Mrs. HEMANS.

AUGUST 23

Follow peace with all men.—HEBREWS xii. 14.

St. Paul saith, peace is our proper relation to all men. There is no reason why, as far as we are concerned, we should not be at peace with every-

body. If even they are not at peace with us, we may be at peace with them. Let them look to their own hearts; we have only to do with our own. Let us "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." It is not without design that these two were connected together by the apostle—following peace and holiness. A life of enmities is greatly in opposition to growth in holiness. All that commotion of petty animosity in which some people live is very lowering; it dwarfs and stunts the spiritual growth of persons; their spiritual station becomes less and less in God's sight and man's. All religious habits and duties, prayer, charity, and mercy, are formed and matured when the man is in a state of peace with others. He can then think seriously, calmly, and wisely; but there is an end to all religious progress when a man's whole mind is taken up in the morbid excitement of small enmities—his thoughts and his cares are frittered away upon trifles. He does not follow peace, and therefore he does not follow holiness.—MOZLEY.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

AUGUST 24.

When Thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee.—JOHN i. 43.

Lo, beneath the fig tree's shade,
Where of old Nathaniel paid
To the Lord his hidden vows;
Through its broad umbrageous boughs,

Upon the saint's lone hour of need
Fell Heaven's approving smile,
And own'd an Israelite indeed,
In whom there was no guile.

Almost from himself conceal'd,
Now to God he stands reveal'd;
Now the blessèd fruit receiving
Which had grown from meek believing;
The hidden saint his Lord ordains
His messenger to be,
To gather in far richer gains,
And greater things to see.

Thence the saint, unknown and lowly,
Set apart by God, and holy,
Changed in office and in name,
Saint Bartholomew became;
And on his day the Church doth pray
Of God, in Christ's dear Name,
To love that Word, which he believed,
Preach and receive the same.

MONSELL.

AUGUST 25.

With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

ROMANS x. 10.

The Creed is a tradition, often it has been called *the* tradition, of the Church. As such we receive it, and rejoice in it. As it has come down to us, it must be a tradition. And the daily use of this Creed in our service connects us with hundreds of thousands in all nations and ages, who have spoken these words in lonely rooms, or on sick beds, despairing of life, and crushed with the sense of evil, yet realizing their relation to God through all

variations of opinion, and through all ignorance and confusion which they had inherited from others, or into which they had fallen themselves. The Creed occurs in the midst of confessions, prayers, thanksgivings, which interpret its use. We say in whom we believe because we are about to cast ourselves upon Him in utter helplessness, to ask help from Him for ourselves and all mankind, to beseech the Father through the Son to renew in us that spirit of holiness and fear and love, who can enable us to know His Name and to trust in it evermore.—**MAURICE.**

AUGUST 26.

That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.—**JOHN iii. 6.**

There are those who stand out from among the crowd, which reflects merely the atmosphere of feeling and standard of society around it, with an impress upon them which bespeaks a heavenly birth. Their criterion of what is valuable and to be sought after, is different from that of others. They do not press forward for the prizes of this world; they stand apart from the struggle in which common minds are absorbed. But they do this without spiritual pride; they think little of themselves, and much of others, and they have a love of their brethren and of all whom God has made after His own image. They have these and other great common characteristics, though they have differences of natural disposition, and exhibit the action of

divine grace, each in the form in which his natural character is adapted to show it. We know the history of these characters; they are the birth of the Divine Spirit.—MOZLEY.

AUGUST 27.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.—EPHESIANS iv. 30.

When the apostles speak of grieving the Holy Spirit, they are not, they cannot be, using an idle and profane metaphor. They must mean what they say. They must mean that God is beseeching men to enter into His rest. A gracious Friend, ever nigh to us, ever persuading our hearts to trust Him, ever inviting us to give up that suspicion which has been the cause of our sin, and is the fruit of it,—this is He whom the Scriptures preach to us. As clearly do they present to us what the result of distrust is. “They *could not* enter into rest because of unbelief.” This punishment is not one which God devises for them; it is what they devise for themselves. The punishment is *not* resting in Him, in whom only a creature who is formed to know Him, to love Him, to depend upon Him, can rest. Our consciences tell us how certain the judgment is; we know that restlessness has been, and is, the great curse of ourselves and of all human creatures. We know that we distrust God through love of visible things; and the consequence has always been, must always be, the same—growing restlessness. Are not the words, “They cannot enter into

rest," written deep upon the struggles, the confessions, even the seeming triumphs of multitudes?—**MAURICE.**

AUGUST 28.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

HEBREWS xii. 1.

It is not always easy to persuade ourselves that we are actually running a race, any more than that there are spectators of the race. Yet this thought has taken such hold upon men in all countries and periods, that our consciences tell us it cannot be based upon a conceit. Those who are engaged in the contests of the world for eminence and success, have felt that it is applicable to them. They love to distance other runners, by fair means or by foul. Prizes—precious or worthless—are before them; he who will give up most for them has the best chance of winning them. The Greek games and the Roman amphitheatre were continually suggesting thoughts to the mind of St. Paul. He speaks of forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before; of pressing to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He had the strongest inward conviction that the strivings of men's spirits after a spiritual reward, a spiritual goal, are as real as any efforts and energies of their bodies can possibly be.—**MAURICE.**

AUGUST 29.

The king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.—2 SAMUEL xix. 1.

O haunted soul,

Down whose dim corridors for ever roll
The voices of the dead; whose Holy Ground
Re-echoes, at the midnight hour, with sound
Of feet, that long ago were laid to rest,
Yet trouble thee for ever! lo, a Guest
Is waiting at the gate, and unto Him
Thou shalt bemoan thy dead, and He will take
Sweet words and comfort thee.

Thine eyes are dim. But stretch
Thine hands to Him. He will not break
The bruised reed.

Or are thy dearest still
With thee on earth,—do their sweet voices fill
The house with singing? Let the fairest room
Be for the Master's use, and from His shrine
Blessings and peace shall rest on thee and thine.

B. M.

AUGUST 30.

Let the . . . meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord.—PSALM xix. 14.

Who can live in the world without becoming aware that the very air which surrounds him is cut through in all directions by wishes, eager, impetuous wishes; wishes—happy or sad, according as they promise or not their own fulfilment—flying like spirits and invisible messengers in all directions? And of this innumerable host of wishes, which constitute, we may almost say, human nature, there is hardly one which does not affect us morally. What tests of our character are our wishes! Some-

times surer tests than our acts. We act formally—conventionally. Our wishes show our hearts. Are there not occasions in life in which some secret wish which we have is one of the deepest of inward sins, lowering us more than many outward offences would do? What then, if people, instead of wishing for any earthly gift with that sharpness of desire they do, could from the heart wish that they were religious, that they could believe thoroughly in another world, and in God's promises with respect to it? The teaching of Scripture is that the strong wish for this state of mind will be itself the means of obtaining it.—MOZLEY.

AUGUST 31.

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 52.

A future life is not proved by experiment. Generation after generation have gone to their graves, looking for the morning of the resurrection; the travellers have all gone with their faces set eastward, and their eyes turned to that eternal shore upon which the voyage of life will land them. But from that shore there is no return; none come back to tell us the result of the journey; there is no report, no communication made from the world they have arrived at. No voice reaches us from all the myriads of the dead, to announce that the expectation is fulfilled, and that experiment has ratified the argument for immortality. Between us and them

there is a great gulf fixed, that all indeed do cross which go *from hence*, but which none can pass that would come from thence. On one side of our road the objects move with rapidity past us, on the other all stands still. All points in one direction; but the great interpretation, the marvellous anticipation, still awaits the crown of experiment. Even the historical evidence, however strong, of a resurrection which has taken place, comes, in its bearing on our faith, under this law.—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 1.

God be merciful to me a sinner.—LUKE xviii. 13.

Down at Thy feet, O Lord, down at Thy feet,

Here let me rest :

Lowly in penitence; upon the ground

My brow hard press'd.

Down at Thy feet, O Lord, and not, not yet

To see Thy face :

Only to know and feel that I have found

The resting-place.

Far have I wander'd, Lord—have wander'd far

Away from Thee :

How is it that the blessed, blessed rest

Is come to me ?

All of Thy mercy, Thou most merciful !

I can but weep :

Weep in repentant joy, for Thou hast found

Thy wandering sheep.

When wilt Thou raise me up in pardoning love ?

O Lord, not yet :

For when I see Thy face I shall not weep—

I shall forget.

Then let me rest awhile in grief and shame,
Down at Thy feet,
Before mine eyes behold the vision bright
Of joy complete.

DAMON.

SEPTEMBER 2.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—ROMANS viii. 14.

The Spirit who gave us our new birth is God. Before Him all bonds fall off. If only we yield our will to Him, His power shall be ours, and by His help every sin of the soul is broken through, and we are set free. Not by our own power, not by our own will; though it be still with our own act, willingly and freely. This is the office of the Holy Spirit in all our sanctification. He first inspires thoughts, inclinations, desires, intentions of holiness. He goes before, leading the way; leading us on by soft inward persuasions, and by a sweet sense of God's will. The working of the Holy Spirit is co-extensive with our whole moral being. He presides over all the springs of thought, word, and deed; by His gracious presence endowing us with power and will to mortify sin, and to live in holiness. And this gift of the Spirit of holiness is itself the gift of life. His persuasions are by illuminations of truth and inspirations of holiness, and these are powers which act not by force, but like the lights and dews of heaven, by a piercing virtue, infusing new gifts of fruitfulness and power into the works of God.—MANNING.

SEPTEMBER 3.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

We will, and we will not. We have, as it were, two wills; like the fable of the two serpents which preyed on either side of a man's heart: a will divided against itself; its superior part decreeing obedience; its sensitive, shrinking from the task. What a mystery is personal imperfection! Who does not desire to be "unclothed," and yet still more "to be clothed upon"? Is it not strange that the sick should shrink from perfect health; that they are so enamoured of decay, that they are unwilling to be whole? Perhaps it is that we do not and cannot realize the thought that we shall one day be without sin; that, in the kingdom of God, our whole soul and our whole being will be in as perfect a tune and harmony with God as the hosts of angels. It seems a dream, or the imagination of a heated brain. It sounds as something of a most presumptuous aspiration, to conceive that one day we shall be in body deathless, and in soul without a spot. Verily we are "like unto them that dream;" but it is as the dream of prophets, full of truth and God.—MANNING.

SEPTEMBER 4.

Make me a clean heart, O God : and renew a right spirit within me.—PSALM li. 10.

Dare to *wish* to be spiritual, is what we would say to any man of the world, who, devoted to the objects of this world, absorbed in its exciting struggles, cannot bring himself even to form the wish to be another man than he is—nay, who even starts back from wishing for it, as if he were wishing for his death. To such a one might we not say, Dare, O weak and faltering soul—dare, at any rate, to wish to have that which is your chief good. You imagine it now to be a sort of death : but it is not this ; it is life from the dead. You think now that to be spiritually minded is to be emptied of all that interests, all that invites and wins desire, all that attracts sympathy ; to have the full mind, and the life which overflows with stimulus, changed for a blank void. But it is not so. The new life will be full of interests, full of desire. Dare, then, to *wish* to be changed, and do not be terrified like a child at the mere notion of a new state.—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 5.

This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.—MARK vii. 6.

There is a passage in a Greek drama in which one of the personages shrinks irresolutely from a proposed crime, which is to turn out to his own and

his companion's great profit; and the other says to him, "*Dare*, and *afterwards* we shall show ourselves just." It is to be feared that this is the way that many a man has spoken to his own faltering conscience, when it shrank from an unscrupulous act which promised a great worldly advancement. Dare, he has said to himself, dare to take this one step; this step will be the beginning of advancement, and when I am elevated in the world, then I shall show myself a good man, and have the reputation of one. Thus it is that people persuade themselves that religion is not made for the hurry and struggle of life. Now, they think—now, in the very thick of the struggle—they must be allowed some little liberty. Afterwards it will be different, but *now* one cannot be impeded, now there must not be this check, this shackle; religion must wait a little. Of what value can a man's goodness be which is the result of such a bargain as this? What can it be but a profession when it does come—a respectable exterior, not an inward conformation of the man to the image of God?—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 6.

O Lord, thou hast searched me out and known me.

PSALM cxxxix. 1.

Man is afraid of man. We know it is so; God hath made it to be so. There is nothing that people who feel they are guilty are more afraid of than the countenance of a man who is able to find out their

guilt. They would face anything rather than this; they dare not look such a one in the face. Well, then, our Lord is man. He is man now in heaven, though that human nature is glorified. He who reigns in heaven and in earth, to whom all power is given, to whom every knee shall bow, is God and man too. However, then, we may fear the countenance of man, we cannot escape being judged by One who is man. He judges us now, though not openly; He looks into our hearts; He knows what is true and what is false there, what is sound and what is corrupt. Our hearts are open to one who is man; we are searched and tested by His infallible insight. He sits upon an invisible throne of judgment, having all hearts before Him. Shall we not be afraid before Him, then—the Man Jesus Christ. If we fear the face of mere man, shall we not dread the face of Him who is God and man?—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 7.

Mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee, O God!

Sudden gushes of thought or feeling will be of a very poor earthly quality, they will not have any relish of that well of water which springeth up into everlasting life, if the spirit do not exercise itself in more orderly meditations. The right method of such meditations is not easy to discover. Most who have desired to cultivate the habit have endured bitter mortifications—even cruel failures. How can I put myself in the right posture for thought?

Where ought I to begin? What is the secret of realizing the truths which I believe? What have thought and prayer to do with each other? What should I ask for when I pray? These are questions which are asked again and again; often evaded rather than answered. . . . To those who are conscious of great weakness and great tendency to incoherence in their spiritual efforts, the collects have afforded, and will afford, unspeakable help. To begin from God, and consider how He meets His creatures—not to begin from some mere chance feeling of ours, and consider how we may work ourselves into a right state—this is the blessed and pregnant hint which the collects supply us with. They give a strong satisfying view of the character of God, of His love to men, of what He has done for men; and this is the ground of prayer.—MAURICE.

SEPTEMBER 8.

Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.—2 CORINTHIANS v. 2.

Then, when my race on earth is run,
My day of work and waiting done,
And I, with tottering footsteps, wend
Nearer to what men call "My end;"
And they in whom life's tide is high
With pitying whisper pass me by;
I ask no pity for my fate—
Nay, rather, friends, congratulate!
For home is near, and it is late!
And when beneath the church's shade
My lifeless body hath been laid,

With such sweet words of prayer and praise
As men round Christian death-beds raise,
Let none, as for some lost one, weep ;
"He giveth His beloved sleep !"
Let no one think of me with pain ;
"To live is Christ, to die is gain !"
Say rather, "Thank God, he at last
Is safe, all sins and sorrows past ;
Gone home !" That is the only word
That should from Christian lips be heard.
No more with weary steps to roam
Earth's wilderness—gone home—gone home !

MONSELL.

SEPTEMBER 9.

In honour preferring one another.—ROMANS xii. 10.

Misfortune, adversity, soften the human heart. Those who have fallen, those who have never risen—the depressed, the humbled—are unconscious flatterers ; they raise a man on a pedestal to himself. Not so a mass of struggling equals ; even when they do what is natural and right, they do not do this ; it would indeed be very mischievous if they did. They make, even when perfectly fair, and hardly even impatient, still severe judges. And if their aims come into collision with your own, as in a general competition they will do, this tries equity and good temper. Whence do those grievances come which prey upon men's spirits ; whence those wounded feelings which last often for life ? Those sharp strokes cannot come from a quarter that we condescended to ; they must be, then, the result of relations with equals. It is thus that a life, or

ordinary and common probation, which is what a man generally leads when he lives with his equals, is found, when examined, to contain a powerful supply of the most finished and subtle weapons of discipline. Equals are, more than inferiors, the natural correction of self-love. And while pity has certainly effects of great beauty in its own field, still the palm of a stronger and sharper correction may belong to another sphere of training.—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 10.

Give unto Thy servants, O God, that peace which the world cannot give.—COLLECT.

Thought and prayer both come from a hidden source; they go forth to fight with foes and gain victory in the external world; they return to rest in Him who inspired them. Oh, how fresh and original will each of our lives become, what flatness will pass from society, what barrenness from conversation, what excitement and restlessness from our religious acts, when we understand these secrets! When the morning prayer is really a prayer for grace, to One whose service is perfect freedom, in knowledge of whom is eternal life; when at evening we really ask One, from whom all good thoughts and holy desires and just works proceed, for the peace which the world cannot give!—MAURICE.

SEPTEMBER 11.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord.—PSALM xxvii. 13.

It is the least that a man can do, to wish with all his heart to have some valuable thing, if he is to expect some day to have it. How simple a condition, could man only once resolve steadily to wish for the possession of that which he knows to be his chief good; could he but cast aside, once for all, all those vain, those fruitless longings for things that are out of his reach—for gifts and faculties which only glitter and attract the eye—and wish, in the sincerity of his heart, for what is really to be had for the wishing—for religious faith and temper! What happiness, what comfort, what serenity of spirit, what cheerful hope, is in men's power, could they but bring themselves to wish heartily for that faith from which all these fruits spring! But "they whose hearts desire nothing, pray for nothing;" and, not praying, they do not obtain. Desire is the first condition. "We receive grace in the same degree we desire it."—MOZLEY.

SEPTEMBER 12.

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

The short prayers following the Creed, which are given to the minister and the congregation alternately, are intended, I apprehend, as hints respecting what may be called our spontaneous thoughts. We are not at the mercy of our own thoughts, however

rudely they may claim dominion over us. We have the power to say to this, "Go," and it goeth; and to another, "Come," and it cometh. Every man knows that this prerogative belongs to him, and knows that he is guilty when he does not exercise it. But it is a gift which requires careful and incessant cultivation; it can be cultivated effectually only in one way. If each impulse from without be met with an impulse from within, if sudden impressions are sustained by prayers, as sudden, to the Lord of our spirits, we may acquire a mastery over the subjects of our own spiritual kingdom, which will be otherwise always turbulent and refractory.—
MAURICE.

SEPTEMBER 13.

The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.—ISAIAH lx. 19.

Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thy eyes!
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons and daughters, yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend!
See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,
And heap'd with products of Sabæan springs!
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow!
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day.
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;

But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
 One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze,
 O'erflow Thy courts : the Light Himself shall shine
 Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine !
 The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
 Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
 But fix'd His word, His saving power remains :
 Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns.

POPE.

SEPTEMBER 14.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.—MATTHEW iii. 3.

Hark ! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers ;
 Prepare the way ! a God, a God appears !
 A God, a God ! the vocal hills reply ;
 The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.
 Lo, earth receives Him from the bending skies !
 Sink down, ye mountains, and, ye valleys, rise !
 With heads declined, ye cedars, homage pay ;
 Be smooth, ye rocks ; ye rapid floods, give way !
 The Saviour comes, by ancient bards foretold !
 Hear Him, ye deaf ! and, all ye blind, behold !
 He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
 And on the sightless eyeball pour the day :
 'Tis He th' obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
 And bid new music charm th' unfolding ear :
 The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
 And leap exulting like the bounding roe.
 No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear,
 From every face he wipes off every tear.
 In adamant chains shall death be bound,
 And hell's grim tyrant feel the eternal wound.
 As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
 Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
 Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
 By day o'ersees them, and by night protects,

The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;
Thus shall mankind His guardian care engage,
The promised Father of the future age.

POPE.

SEPTEMBER 15.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him.

LAMENTATIONS iii. 25.

The child leans on its parent's breast,
Leaves there its cares, and is at rest;
The bird sits singing by its nest,
And tells aloud
His trust in God, and so is blest
'Neath every cloud.

He has no store, he sows no seed;
Yet sings aloud, and doth not heed;
By flowing stream, or grassy mead
He sings to shame
Men, who forget, in fear of need,
A Father's name.

The heart that trusts for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs:
Come good or ill,
Whate'er to-day, to-morrow brings,
It is His will!

T. WILLIAMS.

SEPTEMBER 16.

Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply.

When we think of the return of Lazarus to his house at Bethany, it is not with an unmixed delight we ask whether he could have welcomed the world's

confusions which he had escaped? whether the thought must not have haunted him that, after a little while, he should be in the same cave again? These are questions which it may be well for us to consider; though, perhaps, they are not different in kind from those which arise when any one who has been on the borders of the unseen world, who has taken leave of kinsfolk and friends, who has had glimpses of another country, suddenly recovers, and has to adapt himself once more to the business and intercourse of the earth. In one case, as in the other, I conceive there is but this solution of the difficulty. The man must be glad to be placed where it pleases Christ that he should be placed. He will not certainly be nearer Him by complaining of his destiny, or by not desiring exactly the work which has been given him to do. If he has dreamed of a heaven above where he shall be under some other law than that, or where his will must not be in conformity with that law, the dream will never be realized. So, doubtless, Lazarus was taught by his discipline. And this may have been to him, if he could take it in, a greater comfort than even his appearing again beside the old hearth—a compensation for all he might suffer then or afterwards—that through him multitudes unborn were to learn the meaning of their own death, the secret of their own life, and who is the Friend that interprets them both.—MAURICE.

SEPTEMBER 17.

I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude . . . stood before the throne, and before the Lamb.—REVELATION vii. 9.

There is nothing so distressing to an earnest man as the thought which sometimes rises in his own mind, that here we are bound together in families and nations, that after death all such relations cease, that all becomes individual and solitary. But surely future blessedness is the perfection of the present; not the utter undoing of all which has been blessed here. To escape from solitude and individualism, to be made capable of friendship and society, this has been the gift God has conferred upon us below. Families, nations, Churches, have been His; our sins have been the dissolution of them. If St. John's teaching is true, the multitude that no man can number is a society. Their robes have become white, because every stain of selfishness has been washed from them by the blood of the Lamb. There is no dull uniformity, no single tongue; but all is harmonious amidst diversity. There all give glory to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. In that company the one word which is connected with the Divine Name is salvation—salvation from the curse that men have made for themselves.—MAURICE.

SEPTEMBER 18.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—PHILIPPIANS iii. 14.

If the men of the world, who have the spirit of the world, are so desirous to see an earthly king—at least, in all his ornaments and glory—how much more should *they* desire to see Christ, in whom the drops of the quickening Spirit hath instilled, and whose hearts He hath wounded with the divine love of Christ, the heavenly King! They are enchained in that beauty and unspeakable glory, in that incorruptible splendour and that incomprehensible riches of the true and eternal King, Christ; with desire and longings after whom they are entirely taken up, being wholly turned to Him, and long to attain that inexpressible blessedness, which by the Spirit they behold; for the sake of which they esteem all the beauty, and ornaments, and glory, and riches, and honour of kings and princes but as nothing. For they are wounded with the beauty of God, and the heavenly life of immortality hath dropped into their souls. Therefore do they wish for the love of the heavenly King, and depart from all terrene engagements, that so they may still keep that desire alone in their hearts.—MACARIUS.

SEPTEMBER 19.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.—LUKE xvi. 26.

No thought is more overpowering than that every one who lives, or has lived, is destined for endless bliss or torment; it is far too much for us to realize. But what especially increases the mind's confusion when it attempts to do so is just this very thing, that there are but these two states, that every individual among us is either in one or the other. It is certainly quite beyond our understanding, that all we should now be living together as relatives, friends, associates, neighbours; that we should be familiar or intimate with each other; that there should be among us a general intercourse, circulation of thought, interchange of good offices, the action of mind upon mind, and will upon will, and conduct upon conduct; and yet, after all, that there should be a bottomless gulf between us, running among us invisibly, and cutting us off into two parties: not, indeed, a gulf impassable here, God be praised! not impassable till we pass into the next world; but really existing, so that every person we meet is, in God's unerring eye, either on the one side or the other. Endeavour then, to realize that you have souls, and pray God to enable you to do so.—J. H. NEWMAN.

SEPTEMBER 20.

For the fashion of this world passeth away.

1 CORINTHIANS vii. 31.

Let us then thus account of our present state. It is precious as revealing to us, amid shadows and figures, the existence and attributes of Almighty God and His elect people. It is precious because it enables us to hold intercourse with immortal souls who are on their trial as we are. It is momentous as being the scene and means of our trial; but beyond this it has no claims upon us. We should remember that it is scarcely more than an accident of our being; that it is no part of ourselves who are immortal; that we are immortal spirits, independent of time and space, and that this life is but a sort of outward stage on which we act for a time, and which is only sufficient and only intended to answer the purpose of trying whether we will serve God or no. We may be poor or rich, young or old, honoured or slighted, and it ought to affect us no more than if we were actors in a play, and though they may appear to be superior one to another, they are in reality all on a level.—J. H. NEWMAN.

*ST. MATTHEW'S DAY.***SEPTEMBER 21.**

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these . . . And Matthew the publican.—MATTHEW x. 2, 3.

Few stars in the firmament of the Church shine brighter than that of St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles, and the evangelist of what may be called the mother Gospel. And what was St. Matthew originally? A man conversant, not with rural, but with city life—not with contemplation, but with business. Not an unsophisticated fisherman, like the rest of his colleagues, but a collector of taxes for the Roman Government—one who sat daily at the receipt of custom, driving a trade essentially secular. Yet God Incarnate crossed his path, and singled him out of the throng as one who should draw many souls, minted anew with the image and superscription of the heavenly King, into the treasury of God; and sat at meat in his house in company with many publicans and sinners; and set him upon one of the twelve thrones, which Apostles shall visibly occupy in the regeneration of all things; and placed around his brow, as a coronet, the Pentecostal tongue of fire. It is a great lesson that, if only our hearts are right and true, we may find Christ—or rather be found of Him—in the traffic of secular affairs. May we so learn this lesson, as to know it not in theory only, but by experience!—GOULBURN.

SEPTEMBER 22.

All his days also he eateth in darkness.—ECCLESIASTES v. 17.

A good that never satisfies the mind,
A beauty fading like the April flowers,
A sweet with floods of gall that runs combined,
A pleasure passing ere in thought made ours,
An honour that more fickle is than wind,
A glory at opinion's frown that lowers,
A treasury which bankrupt time devours,
A knowledge than grave ignorance more blind,
A vain delight our equals to command,
A style of greatness, in effect a dream,
A swelling thought of holding sea and land,
A servile lot, decked with a pompous name;
Are the strange ends we toil for here below,
Till wisest death makes us our errors know.

W. DRUMMOND.

SEPTEMBER 23.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labours.—REVELATION xiv. 13.

There is no more inward struggle, no sliding back again, no danger of falling, for they have gained the shore of eternal peace. But, above all, they rest from the strife of evil within themselves. It is not persecution, nor oppression, nor the rage of Satan, nor the assaults of temptation from without that so much oppress a godly man, as the consciousness that sin dwells in his inmost soul, cleaves to every movement of his life, and burdens and sullies with its grasp all his living powers. Evil tempers in sudden flashes, evil thoughts shooting across the

soul and kindling unholy fires in the imagination; thoughts of self in holiest acts, indevoutness of spirit, earthliness of heart, dulness in living the life of God,—these form the burdens which weigh down the most advanced saint while he sojourns here below. But from all this the righteous departed *rest*. The sin that dwelt in them died, when, through death, they began to live. The unimpeded soul now puts forth its new-born life as a tree transplanted to a kindly soil and under a genial sky, and blooms and brings forth fruit in the paradise of God.—MANNING.

SEPTEMBER 24.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

HEBREWS iv. 9.

Oh how great and good it will be, if, when this troublesome life is over, we also enter into that same rest, if the time shall one day come when we shall enter into His tabernacle above, and hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings! Here we are tossing upon the sea, and the wind is contrary. All through the day we are tried and tempted in various ways. We cannot speak, think, or act but infirmities are at hand. But in the unseen world, where Christ has entered, all is peace. No more sin; no more guilt; no more remorse; no more punishment; no more trial; no infirmity to depress us; no affection to mislead us; no passion to transport us; no prejudice to blind us; no sloth; no pride; no envy;

no malice; but the light of God's countenance, and the pure river of the water of life. That is our home. Here we are but on pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. Let us labour to enter into our rest; let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—J. H. NEWMAN.

SEPTEMBER 25.

Redeeming the time.—COLOSSIANS iv. 5.

What treasure can equal time? It is the seed of eternity; yet we suffer ourselves to go on year after year, hardly using it at all in God's service, or thinking it enough to give Him at most a tithe or a seventh of it; while we strenuously and heartily sow to the flesh, that from the flesh we may reap corruption. "Rivers of water run down mine eyes because men keep not Thy law," so says the psalmist. Doubtless an inspired prophet saw far more clearly than we can see the madness of men in squandering their treasure upon sin, which is meant to buy their chief good; but, if so, what must this madness appear in God's sight? We have been told what He thinks of man's unbelief, though we cannot enter into the depth of His thoughts. He showed it to us in act and deed as far as we could receive it, when He even sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem us from the world, which most surely was not lightly done. "The wicked," he says, "shall go into everlasting punishment,"—words most surely not lightly spoken.—J. H. NEWMAN.

SEPTEMBER 26.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.

REVELATION xx. 12.

All who have ever gained a name in the world, all the mighty men of war that ever were, all the great statesmen, all the crafty counsellors, all the scheming aspirants, all the reckless adventurers, all the covetous traders, all the proud voluptuaries, are still in being, though helpless and unprofitable. Balaam, Saul, Joab, Ahithophel, good and bad, wise and ignorant, rich and poor, each has his separate place, each dwells by himself in that sphere of light or darkness which he has provided for himself here. What a view this sheds upon history! We are accustomed to read it as a tale or fiction, and we forget that it concerns immortal beings who cannot be swept away, who are what they were however this earth may change. And so, again, all the names we see written on monuments in churches or churchyards, all the writers whose names and works we see in libraries, all the workmen who raised the great buildings far and near which are the wonder of the world, they are all in God's remembrance, they all live.—J. H. NEWMAN.

SEPTEMBER 27.

Lord, teach us to pray.—LUKE xi. 1.

Let us recollect for how long a period our prayers have been the standard forms of devotion in the Christian Church, and we shall gain a fresh reason

for loving them, and a fresh source of comfort in using them. Surely there are few of us, if we dwelt on the thought, but would feel it a privilege to use (for instance, in the Lord's Prayer) the very petitions which Christ spoke. He gave the prayer and used it. His apostles used it; all the saints ever since have used it; when we use it we seem to join company with them. The Lord's Prayer brings us near to Christ and to His disciples in every age. . . . And we cannot use it too often; it contains in itself a sort of plea for Christ's listening to us; we cannot, so that we keep our minds fixed on its petitions, and use our mind as well as our lips when we repeat it. This also is true in its measure of most of those prayers which our church teaches us to use. It is true of the Psalms, also, and of the Creeds, all of which have become sacred from the memory of saints departed who have used them.—J. H. NEWMAN.

SEPTEMBER 28.

Mark how there still has run, enwoven from above,
Through thy life's darkest woof, the golden thread of love.

Let us not take half-views of men and things. The woof of life is dark, that we grant, but it is shot through with a web of brightness. The doctrine of compensation is found everywhere. The morning rainbow glittering among the dangerous vapours of the west predicts that the day will not unclouded pass away; the evening rainbow declares that the storms

are past, and that serene weather is setting in. Such is the life of all whom God disciplines. The morning or the evening brightness is the portion of a life, the rest of which is storm. And this, too, is life. The sorrows of the past stand out most vividly in our recollections, because they are the keenest of our sensations; but the infinitesimals of happiness that from moment to moment make life sweet and pleasant are forgotten; and very richly has our Father mixed the materials of these with the homeliest actions and domesticities of existence. See two men meeting together in the streets, mere acquaintances; they will not be five minutes together before a smile will overspread their countenances, or a merry laugh ring out. This hath God done. God created the smile and the laugh as well as the sigh and the tear. The aspect of this life is stern, very stern. It is a mere superficial account of it which skims over its grave mystery and refuses to hear its low deep undertone of anguish. But there is enough from hour to hour of bright sunny happiness to remind us that its Creator's highest name is Love.—ROBERTSON.

SEPTEMBER 29.

For He shall give His angels charge over thee.—PSALM xci. 11.

And is there care in heaven, and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But oh, the exceeding grace

Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour as that succour wants!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
Oh, why should heavenly God to man have such regard!

SPENSE.

SEPTEMBER 30.

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.—HEBREWS iv. 15.

This is the blessing of the thought of the Divine sympathy, the sympathy of the Divine Human. He knows what strength is needed. He gives grace to help, and when the world, with its thousand forms of temptation, seems to whisper to us, as to Esau, "Sell me thy birthright," the other voice speaks, "Shall I barter blessedness for happiness? the inward peace for the outward thrill? the benediction of my Father for a mess of pottage?" There are moments when we seem to tread above this earth, superior to its allurements, able to do without its kindness, firmly bracing ourselves to do our work, as He did His. These moments are not the sunshine of life. They did not come when the world would have said that all around you was glad; but it was

when outward trials had shaken the soul to its very centre, then there came from Him, "Grace to help in time of need."—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 1.

In Thy presence is the fulness of joy.—PSALM xvi. 11.

Oh ! paradise must show more fair
Than any earthly ground :
And therefore longs my spirit there
Right quickly to be found.

In paradise a stream must flow
Of everlasting love :
Each tear of longing shed below
Therein a pearl will prove.

In paradise a breath of balm
All anguish must allay,
Till every anguish growing calm,
Even mine shall flee away.

And there the tree of stillest peace
In verdant spaces grows :
Beneath it one can never cease
To dream of blest repose.

TRENCH.

OCTOBER 2.

Bless the pangs that made thee see
This was no world of rest for thee.

KEBLE.

This world, Christian brethren, is not yours ;
thank God, it is not. It is dropping away from you
like worn-out autumn leaves ; but beneath it, hidden
in it, there is another world lying as the flower lies
in the bud. This is *your world*, which must

burst forth at last into eternal luxuriance. All you stand on, see, and love, is but the husk of something better. Things are passing—our friends are dropping off from us; strength is giving way; our relish for earth is going, and the world no longer wears for our hearts the radiance it once wore. We have the same sky above us, and the same scenes around us, but the freshness that our hearts extracted from everything in boyhood, and the glory that seemed to rest once on earth and life has faded away for ever. Sad and gloomy truths to the man who is going down to his grave with his work undone. Not sad to the Christian; but rousing, exciting, invigorating. If it be the eleventh hour we have no time for folding of the hands; we will work the faster. Let not the Christian slack his hand from work; for he that doeth the will of God may defy hell itself to quench his immortality—
ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 3.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.—ROMANS xii. 15.

Till we have reflected on it, we are scarcely aware how much the sum of human happiness in the world is indebted to this one feeling—sympathy. We get cheerfulness and vigour, we scarcely know how or where, from mere association with our fellow-men, and from the looks reflected on us of gladness. The workman works with added energy from having

others by. The full family circle has a strength and a life peculiarly its own. The substantial good and the effectual relief which men extend to one another is trifling; but God has given to the weakest and the poorest, power to contribute largely to the common stock of gladness. The child's smile and laugh are mighty powers in the world. When bereavement has left you desolate, what substantial benefit is there which makes condolence acceptable? It cannot replace the loved ones you have lost. It can bestow upon you nothing permanent. But a warm hand has touched yours, and its thrill told you that there was a living response there to your emotion. One look, one human sigh, has done more for you than the costliest present could convey.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 4.

What doest thou here, Elijah?—1 KINGS xix. 9.

Life is for doing. A prophet's life for nobler doing. And the prophet was not doing, but moaning. Such a voice repeats itself to all of us, rousing us from our lethargy, or our despondency, or our protracted leisure. "What doest thou here?" Here, in this short life. There is work to be done—evil to be put down—God's Church purified—good men encouraged—doubting men directed—a country to be saved—time going—life a dream—eternity long—one chance, and but one for ever. What *doest thou* here? Then he went on further, "Arise, go on

thy way." That speaks to us. "On thy way." Be up and doing—fill up every hour, leaving no crevice or cranny for a remorse, or a repentance to creep through afterwards. Let not the mind brood on self; save it from speculation, from those stagnant moments in which the awful teachings of the Spirit grope into the unfathomable unknown. The awful Future becomes intelligible only in the light of an active and felt Present. Go, return on thy way if thou art desponding—*on thy way*, health of spirit will return.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 5.

Faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen.—HEBREWS xi. 1.

A life of religion is a life of faith, and faith is that strange faculty by which a man feels the presence of the invisible, exactly as some animals have the power of seeing in the dark. . . . That is the difference between the Christian and the world. Most men know nothing beyond what they see; their lovely world is all in all to them; its outward beauty, not its hidden loveliness. Prosperity, adversity, sadness, it is all the same, they struggle through it all alone, and when old age comes, and the companions of early life are gone, they feel that they are solitary. In all this deep strange world they never meet, or but for a moment, the Spirit of it all, Who stands at their very side. And it is exactly the opposite of this that makes a Christian. Move where he will, there is a thought

and a Presence which he cannot put aside—he is “haunted for ever by the Eternal Mind.” God looks out upon him from the clear sky. A living Redeemer stands beside him, goes with him, talks with him, as a man with his friend. The emphatic description of a life of spirituality is—“Enoch walked with God.”—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 6.

O God, from whom no secrets are hid. . . . Have pity on me !

It is in entire and perfect sympathy with all humanity that the heart of Jesus differs from every other heart that is found among the sons of men. And it is this—oh ! it is this which is the chief blessedness of having such a Saviour. If you are poor, you can only get a miserable sympathy from the rich ; with the best intentions they cannot understand you. If you are in pain, it is only a factitious and constrained sympathy you get from those in health. They sit beside you, when the regular condolence is done, conversing upon topics with each other which jar upon the ear. *They* sympathise ? Miserable comforters are ye all. If you are miserable and tell out your grief, you have the shame of feeling that you were not understood, and that you have bared your inner self to a rude gaze. If you are in doubt, you cannot tell your doubts to religious people. . . . If you are depressed with guilt, to whom shall you tell out your tale of shame ? . . . Then it is that, repulsed on every side

and lonely, we turn to Him whose mighty heart understands and feels all. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Lord, "Thou knowest that I love Thee."
—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 7.

He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.—GALATIANS vi. 8.

In the pursuit of knowledge, wealth, reputation, circumstances have power to mar the wisest schemes. The hoards of years may be lost in a single night; the wisdom stored up by a whole life may perish when some fever impairs memory. But in the kingdom of Christ, where inward character is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its exactly proportioned due of success. "*Whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no blight, nor mildew, nor scorching sun, nor rain-deluge, which can turn that harvest into a failure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Sow for time, and probably you will succeed in time; sow the seed of life—humbleness, pure-heartedness, love, and in the long eternity which lies before the soul, every minutest grain will come up again with an increase of thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold.—
ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 8.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.—REVELATION xiv. 13.

Weep not for me :—

Be blithe as wont, nor tinge with gloom
The stream of love that circles home,
Light hearts and free !
Joy is the gift Heaven's bounty lends ;
Nor miss my face, dear friends !

I still am near :—

Watching the smiles I prized on earth,
Your converse mild, your blameless mirth.

Now too, I hear,
Of whispered sounds the tale complete,
Low prayers, and musings sweet.

A sea before

The throne is spread :—its pure still glass
Pictures all earth-scenes as they pass.

We, on its shore,

Share, in the bosom of our rest,
God's knowledge, and are blest.

J. H. NEWMAN.

OCTOBER 9.

For He knew what was in man.—JOHN ii. 25.

No man can have read the Gospels without remarking that they ascribe to Jesus unerring skill in reading man. People, we read, began to show enthusiasm for Him ; but Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, "for He knew what was in man." He knew that the flatterers of to-day would be the accusers of to-morrow. Nathaniel stood before Him. He had

scarcely spoken a word, but at once, unhesitatingly, to Nathaniel's own astonishment,—“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” There came to him a young man with vast possessions; a single sentence, an exaggerated epithet, an excited manner, revealed his character. Enthusiastic and amiable, Jesus loved him; capable of aspiration after something more than mere obedience, but not of sacrifice, Jesus tested him to the quick, and the young man failed. He read through Zaccheus when he climbed up the sycamore tree; through Judas with his benevolent saying about the selling of the alabaster box for the poor, and his false kiss; through the thief on the cross; a faith that could be saved; through the zeal of the man who in a fit of enthusiasm offered to go with Him wheresoever He went. He read through the Pharisees and His whole being shuddered with the recoil of utter and irreconcilable aversion.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 10.

And he requested for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough, O Lord; take away my life.—1 KINGS xix. 4.

What greater minds like Elijah's have felt intensely, all we have felt in our own degree. Not one of us but what has felt his heart aching for want of sympathy. We have had our lonely hours, our days of disappointment, and our moments of hopelessness—times when our highest feelings have been misunderstood, and our purest met with ridicule;

days when our heavy secret was lying unshared like ice upon the heart. And then the spirit gives way, we have wished that all was over—that we could lie down tired, and rest, like the children, from life,—that the hour was come when we could put down the extinguisher on the lamp, and feel the last grand rush of darkness on the spirit. Now the final cause for this capacity of depression—the reason for which it is granted us, is that it may make God necessary. In such moments it is felt that sympathy beyond human is needful. Alone, the world against him, Elijah turns to God: “It is enough now, O Lord.”—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 11.

In my flesh shall I see God.—JOS xix. 26.

It is no matter of uncertainty to any one of us whether he himself shall die. He knows it. Every time the funeral bell tolls, the thought in some shape suggests itself, “I am a mortal dying man.” That is knowing it. Which of us can realize it? Who can shut his eyes, and bring it before him as a reality, that the day will come when the hearse will stand at the door for him, and all this bright world will be going on without him? Then, again, we all know that earth shall hear her Master’s voice breaking the long silence of centuries, and our dust shall hear it, and stand up among the myriads that are moving on to judgment. Each man in his own proper identity, his very self must see God, and be

seen by Him—looking out on the strange new scene, and doomed to be an actor in it to all eternity. We all know this, but on which of our hearts is it stamped,—not as a doctrine to be proved by texts, but as one of those things which must be hereafter, and in sight of which we are to live now?—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 12.

The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.

PSALM xxiii. 1.

When we are told that God is the Redeemer of the world, we know that love dwells in the bosom of the Most High; but if we want to know that God feels for us individually and separately, we must learn by heart this syllable, "My Redeemer." Child of God, if you would have your thought of God something beyond a cold feeling of His presence, let faith appropriate Christ. You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself. He has counted the hairs of your head. In Old Testament language, "He has put your tears into His bottle," He has remembered your sighs and your smiles. If you have not learnt to say "My Redeemer," then just so far as there is anything tender, or affectionate in your disposition, you will tread the path of your pilgrimage with a darkened and a lonely heart.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 13.

Think on these things.—PHILIPPIANS iv. 8.

It is good for a man to get alone, and there in silence think upon his own death, and feel how time is hurrying him along,—that a little while ago, and he was not—a little while still, and he will be no more. It is good to take the Bible in his hands, and read those passages which speak of the coming, and the end of all, till from the printed syllables there seems to come out something that has life, and form, and substance in it, and all things that the passing in the world group themselves in preparation for that, and melt into its outline. Let us try to live with these things in view: God our Friend; Christ our living Redeemer—our sympathizing Brother—our conquering Champion; the triumph of truth; the end of wrong: we shall live upon realities then; and this world will fade away into that which we know it is, but cannot realize—an appearance and a shadow.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 14.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1 JOHN iv. 8.

Seeketh not Love, at times so occupied,
For thee, as though it cared for none beside?

To great and small things Love alike can reach,
And cares for each as all, and all as each.

'Twas Love, whose quick and ever-watchful eye,
The wanderer's first step homeward did espy.

From its own wardrobe Love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

Love weeps, but from its eyes two things win
The largest tears—its own, its brother's sin.

Once on this painful earth a Man did move,
The Man of griefs, because the Man of Love.

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware,
Love is the only coin that passes there.

The wine of Love can be obtained of none,
Save Him who trod the winepress all alone.

TRENCH:

OCTOBER 15.

They are altogether lighter than vanity.—PSALM lxii. 2.

I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir: I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
To sport their season and be seen no more.

COWPER.

OCTOBER 18.

I . . . know My sheep, and am known of mine.—JOHN x. 14.

There is a certain mysterious tact of sympathy and antipathy by which we discover the like and unlike of ourselves in another's character. You cannot find out a man's opinions unless he chooses to express them; but his feelings and his character you may. He cannot hide them; you feel them in his look, and mien, and tones, and motion. There is a certain something, for instance, in sincerity and reality which cannot be mistaken—a certain something in real grief which the most artistic counterfeit cannot imitate. It is distinguished by nature, not education. There is something in an impure heart which purity detects afar off. Marvellous it is how innocence detects the approach of evil which it cannot know by experience; just as the dove which has never seen a falcon, trembles by instinct at its approach. Jesus knew His sheep; nor does He limit that recognizing power to Himself. He says that the sheep know Him as truly as He the sheep. He knew men on the same principle on which we know men—the same on which we know Him. The only difference is in degree. He knows with infinitely more unerringness than we, but the knowledge is of the same kind.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 17.

God, by His bow, vouchsafes to write
This truth in heaven above :
As every lovely hue is light,
So every grace is love.

KEBLE.

To a child a rainbow is a real thing—substantial and palpable; its limbs rest on the side of yonder hill; he believes that he can appropriate it to himself; and, when instead of gems and gold hid in its radiant bow, he finds nothing but damp mist, cold, dreary drops of disappointment, that disappointment tells that his belief has been a delusion. To the educated man that bow is a blessed illusion, yet it never once deceives; he does not take it for what it is not, he does not expect to make it his own; he feels its beauty as much as the child could feel it, nay, infinitely more. . . . He has linked it with the laws of the universe, and the invisible mind of God; and it brings to him a thrill of awe, and the sense of a mysterious nameless beauty, of which the child did not conceive. It is illusion still, but it has fulfilled the promise. In the realm of spirit, in the temple of the soul, it is the same. All is illusion; but we look for a city which hath foundations; and in this the promise is fulfilled.—ROBERTSON.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST'S DAY.

OCTOBER 18.

The brother whose praise is in the Gospel.

What thanks and praise to Thee we owe,
O Priest and Sacrifice Divine,
For Thy dear saint through whom we know
So many a gracious word of Thine !

When Thou didst choose to tell the tale
Of all Thy manhood's toils and tears,
And for a moment lift the veil
That hides Thy boyhood's spotless years.

How many a soul with guilt oppressed
Has learned to hear the joyful sound,
In that sweet tale of sin confessed—
The Father's love, the lost, the found !

How many a child of sin and shame
Has refuge found from guilty fears,
Through her who to the Saviour came,
With costly ointments and with tears !

O happy saint, whose sacred page,
So rich in words of truth and love,
Pours on the Church from age to age
The healing unction from above ;

The witness of the Saviour's life,
The great Apostle's chosen friend
Through many years of toil and strife
And still found faithful to the end !

OCTOBER 19.

Little things, on little wings,
Bear little souls to heaven.

FABER.

In Christian life every moment and every act is an opportunity of doing the one thing of *becoming* Christ-like—every day is full of a most impressive experience. Every temptation to ill-temper which can assail us to-day will be an opportunity to decide the question whether we shall gain the calmness and the rest of Christ, or whether we shall be tossed by the restlessness and the agitation of the world. Nay, the very vicissitudes of the seasons, day and night, heat and cold, affecting us variably, and producing exhilaration and depression, are so contrived as to conduce toward the being which we become, and decide whether we shall be masters of ourselves, or whether we shall be swept at the mercy of accident and circumstance, miserably susceptible of merely outward influences. Infinite as are the varieties of life, so manifold are the paths to saintly character; and he who has not found out how directly or indirectly to make everything converge towards his soul's sanctification, has as yet missed the meaning of this life.—ROBERTSON.

OCTOBER 20.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.—PHILIPPIANS ii. 4.

Sympathy is not a natural gift, though a few natures may be so endowed with it as to shadow forth the full reality, which can only be obtained by living with Him Who is perfect sympathy, and deeply thinking of that well of life that flows from His pierced side. It is all in vain to seek for the gift in ourselves; it is not there. We must go out of ourselves for it, and the surest way to get it is to feel that we are utterly without it; thus we are driven to ask it of Him "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." The way to get increase of sympathy is to seek for increase of charity. The essence of sympathy is charity. No one without true charity can have godly sympathy. He who was perfect love had perfect sympathy. The more we are conformed to the image of perfect love, the more we really understand and seek to practise St. Paul's description of charity, the truer, and the more abiding, and the deeper will be our sympathy.—SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 21.

O Lord my God, do Thon Thy holy will :
I will be still.

KEBLE.

Beware of murmuring, lest God should "answer you in your folly," and give you the thing which you have vainly fancied you should prefer. Re-

member that your work comes only moment by moment, and as surely as God calls you to work, He gives the strength to do it. Do not think in the morning, "How shall I go through the day?" Each moment, as you need it, the strength will come; only do not look forward an hour; circumstances may be very different to what you expect. Do not worry yourself with misgivings; take each thing quietly. Nothing is such a help to all people, but above all to the sick, as quietness of spirit, self-control, and presence of mind. They may be cultivated to a high degree. Do you sometimes cry out, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest"? Be content; "there remaineth a rest" for you, "incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you." Yet a little while, and you shall enter into it; in the mean time, let us look upon all circumstances as the expression of His will, and as His own voice speaking to us.—
SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 22.

Man never is, but always to be, blest.—POPE.

We live not in our moments or our years;
The Present we fling from us like the rind
Of some sweet Future, which we after find
Bitter to taste, or bind *that* in with fears,
And water it beforehand with our tears—
Vain tears for that which never may arrive:
Meanwhile the joy whereby we ought to live,
Neglected, or unheeded, disappears.

Wiser it were to welcome and make ours
Whate'er of good, though small, the present brings—
Kind greetings, sunshine, songs of birds, and flowers,
With a child's pure delight in little things;
And of the griefs unborn to rest secure,
Knowing that mercy ever will endure.

TRENCH.

OCTOBER 23.

He has given us richly all things to enjoy.—1 TIMOTHY vi. 17.

Contentment is perfect rest and perfect peace. It asks for nothing, seeks for nothing, hopes for nothing, wishes nothing but what God gives. It ceases to look about and see how its condition can be bettered, knowing that what God wills, that must be perfection. Contentment does not ask to see the reasons why God does this or that, or why He withholds things which look like blessings; with open hands it receives all His good gifts, and thanks Him for His love and care. It does not look onwards, knowing that God will provide; it has no wants, no cares, but to know Him more and to love Him better. This state is the duty of all, and especially of those who are called by sickness to constant temptations to sins against contentment. God would not make anything to be our duty unless it were possible of attainment, unless it would be for our highest good, unless He would give us the strength to perform what He requires of us.—SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 24.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed.

MONTGOMERY.

Do not think that continuous speaking to God is the only kind of true prayer. "Lord, Thou knowest my *desire*, and my groaning is not hid from Thee." It is at your heart that He looks. He sees what is there: things which you cannot frame into words, which you cannot express, He fully understands. You cannot tell Him anything; He knows that. You can only say, "Lord, help me!" He hears, and He will surely answer you. You say when you wake in the morning, and in the night, and often in the day, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep me this day without sin." That is prayer, most true prayer. He does not measure its worthiness by its length, but by its sincerity. The mere sense of being in His arms, of His understanding you, His loving you and embracing you, that is prayer; for it is the losing yourself in Him.—SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 25.

But when the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?

KEBLE.

There are but few people who have long known sickness or sorrow, who have not a feeling of dread of all anniversaries. The whole aspect of life is changed, the clouds seem to have gathered black-

ness, the bright spots in life are become fewer. Those days and seasons which once looked bright and joyous, and were welcomed when they returned, seem now to be full of trouble. There was an unbroken family then; there were voices to be heard, which are heard now only in saddened memory; there was precious sympathy to be had then, joyful greetings, and sharings of our joy. But years went on, and friend after friend passed into the world unseen, and made this life sadder and more lonesome. Then sickness came, and life's aspect was wholly changed. And now the days and seasons return, and often seem but to mock your sorrow. . . . But, even so, you may still make all anniversaries holy days—days which shall draw you nearer to God and to the unseen world—and then by degrees they will lose their sadness, and have a peaceful character instead.—SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 26.

Give me a wise and thankful heart,
With God in all my griefs to stay,
Nor from His loved correction start.

KEBLE.

It happens the more frequently that the long discipline of sickness and suffering is given to impetuous and impatient, or over-active spirits. To them, of course, their natural impatience must be as constant fuel to the fire which ever burns within

them, and their discipline will be a very sore one to themselves. Yet fear not, if thus it is with you. "Greater is He that is for you than all they that are against you." The battle is not yours, but God's, and you "shall be more than conquerors, through Him which hath loved us." "Tribulation worketh patience." A quiet, calm frame of mind, ever staying itself on God, is the groundwork of patience. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength;" which also is expressed by the words, "In patience possess ye your souls." Stillness works patience. We must first get into the posture before we can stay in it. What is patience, but remaining in the posture of stillness? You will say, "How difficult this is!" It would indeed be so if it were not that the God of patience is our refuge, and therefore we need not fear "in the days of evil."—SICKNESS, ITS BLESSINGS AND TRIALS.

OCTOBER 27.

And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. . . . And Solomon slept with his fathers.—2 CHRONICLES ix. 22, 31.

A man may read a sermon, the best and most passionate that ever man preached, if he shall but enter into the sepulchres of kings. In the same escorial where the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and decree war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery, where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more; and where our kings have been crowned, their

ancestors lie interred, and they must walk over their grandsire's head to take his crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change, from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to dying like men. There the warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality. There is enough here to cool the flames of lust, to abate the heights of pride, to appease the rich of covetous desires, to dull and dash out the dissembling colours of lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty.—J. TAYLOR.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE'S DAY.

OCTOBER 28.

That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.—JOHN xvii. 21.

Heart in heart and hand in hand,
Once went forth the little band;
One in thought and word and deed,
Unity their law and creed:
Then they conquer'd in the might
Of their oneness and their right;
Then the will of God was done,
When they all in Christ were one.

Lord, the Church in latter days
Wanteth much these holy ways;
Wanteth much that gain, which lies
Ever in self-sacrifice.
Self too proudly keeps its place,
Gifts precedence take of grace;
Men are not content to be
Nothing, when exalting Thee!

Pardon for the past we pray,
Lord, upon this holy day ;
For the future, grace to lead
Safe thro' every time of need ;
Like St. Simon and St. Jude,
With Thy unity imbued ;
Holy temples let us be
Acceptable, Lord, to Thee !

MONSELL.

OCTOBER 29.

All earthly joys go lesse
To the one joy of doing kindnesse.

HERBERT.

Blessèd are the merciful ;
Their lamp in darkness glows ;
They go along in this sad world
With blessing and repose.

Blessèd are the merciful ;
They strew the way with flowers,
And scatter sunshine on the path
That glistens wet with showers.

Blessèd are the merciful ;
They go along their way,
And old men smile, and little ones
Look up amidst their play.

Blessèd are the merciful ;
Their path has once been trod
By Him, the Merciful, Who came
To bring us all to God.

DAMON.

OCTOBER 30.

We are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews and at Jerusalem.—Acts x. 39.

One of the most remarkable features in which the Apostles' Creed resembles the summaries given us by inspired men, is the way in which it dwells on certain plain historical facts, and represents the belief in them to be a necessary part of Christian faith. It has been remarked that this important peculiarity accounts for the introduction of the name of Pontius Pilate into the Apostles' Creed. We say, "Crucified under Pontius Pilate," to mark the date and locality of our Lord's crucifixion, and consequently the historical character of our faith. To record that we are not contented with any transcendental theory of a victory over the powers of evil, won by the Son of God in the human soul, but that we believe in our Lord's birth, life, death, and resurrection, literally and historically, as facts. . . . A Christianity, then, without the facts of Christian history is not only a system quite unknown to the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, but has also lost the motives by which they stirred men's hearts.—TAIT.

OCTOBER 31.

I will instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go,
and I will guide thee with Mine eye.—PSALM xxxii. 8.

All the circumstances which God appoints for us contain in them the bread of life, which is the will of God ; but we often receive the circumstances, and even acknowledge that this precious thing is in them without converting it into nourishment for our souls. We have two classes of counsellors within us—the one good, being the voice of the spirit of Jesus in the conscience, the other evil, being the calls to self-indulgence, self-acting, self-judging, etc. The first is a still small voice, which requires listening and attention if we would hear it at all, or get acquainted with the speaker. The others require no attention, and are attended to in the absence of an opposite attention. These two are the Spirit and the flesh. Christianity consists in living to the Spirit, and subduing or crucifying the flesh ; that is, it consists in listening to and following and cleaving to the Spirit testifying in the conscience ; and ungodliness consists in going forward without attending to this voice of God. Our Christianity is not of us, but in us. Our wisdom is to listen to God at each step, so that we may have His wisdom to direct us.—T. ERSKINE.

*ALL SAINTS' DAY***NOVEMBER 1.**

I believe in the Communion of Saints.

We are brought to-day to the doctrine of the communion of saints; and a glorious doctrine it is, kindling in our hearts, if it please God the Holy Ghost so to work upon us, more earnest desires after humility, and watchfulness, and trust, and powers of active service. For whilst it is good for us to be continually set alone in things spiritual; whilst it is true that religion is to every one of us so personal a matter that there can be no soundness in it unless we are, in the singleness of our own spiritual being, often thus alone with God; yet it is true also that He hath placed us in a company—in a goodly company—of His children; that there are of His ordering many steps before us on the waste over which we have to pass. Yea, our gracious God, lest our courage should fail, or our endurance faint, has set before us an unnumbered company of all ages and conditions, who were once tried by all our weaknesses, and beset by all our dangers, but who have held on even to the end, and won that rest for which we long.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

NOVEMBER 2.

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.—ROMANS ii. 4.

Because God knows us well, and loves us better than we do ourselves, He sends upon us the scrolls of vengeance; the handwriting upon the wall, to

denounce judgment against us : for God is so highly resolved to bring us to repentance some way or other, that if by His goodness he cannot *shame* us into it, He will try if by His judgments He can *scare* us into it. Thus God sent Jonah and denounced judgment against Nineveh, but with the forbearance of forty days for the time of their escape, if they would repent. . . . But sometimes God strikes once and then forbears ; and such are all those sadnesses which are less than death. Every sickness, every loss, every disgrace, the death of friends and nearest relations,—these are all of them the louder calls of God to repentance, but still instances of forbearance. Oh, take heed of despising this goodness ; these are God's latest arts to save us : He hath no way left beyond these, but to punish us with a lasting judgment and a poignant affliction.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 3.

Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—MATTHEW xxv. 23.

Innocence and joy were appointed to dwell together for ever. And joy went not first ; but when innocence went away, sorrow and sickness dispossessed joy of its habitation ; and now this world must be always a scene of sorrows, and no joy can grow here but that which is imaginary and phantastick. Holy souls know that no pleasure can grow from the thorns which Adam planted in the hedges of Para-

dise, and that sorrow, which was brought in by sin, must not go away till it hath returned us into the first condition of innocence. The same instant that quits us from sin and the failings of mortality, the same instant wipes all tears from our eyes; but that is not in this world. In the mean time God afflicts the godly that He might manifest many of His attributes, and His servants exercise many of their virtues.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 4.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.—LUKE xix. 41.

Upon Palm Sunday, when Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adorned with the acclamations of a king and a God, he wet the palms with His tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of heaven that descended upon Mount Hermon—weeping, in the midst of this triumph, over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem. Jesus in His best days was but half triumph and half sorrow. He was sent to tell of His Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower and of foul weather. But I need not tell that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person, that He was made for us a covenant of sufferings; His doctrines were such as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose sufferings and a state of affliction. His very promises were sufferings; His beatitudes were sufferings; His

rewards and His arguments to invite men to follow Him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 5.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for.—HEBREWS xi. 1.

Faith converses with the angels, and antedates the hymns of glory; every man that hath this grace is as certain that there are glories for him, if he perseveres in duty, as if he had heard and sung the thanksgiving song for the blessed sentence of doomsday. And therefore it is no matter if these things are separate and distant objects. None but children and fools are taken with the present trifle, and neglect a distant blessing, of which they have credible and believed notices. Faith makes heaven to be the end of our desires, and God the object of our love and worshippings, and the Scripture the rule of our actions, and Christ our Lord and Master, and the Holy Spirit our mighty assistant and our counsellor; therefore all the uglinesses of the world, and the follies of the flesh, will be uneasy and unsavoury, unreasonable and a load. And then that grace, the grace of faith, shall also correct our weaknesses, and master all our aversations; and though we cannot in this world be perfect masters and triumphant persons, yet we may be conquerors and more; that is, conquerors of the direct hostility, and sure of a crown to be revealed in its due time.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 6.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.

It is the most necessary part of prudence to choose well in the main stake; and the dispute is not much: for if eternal things be better than temporal, the soul more noble than the body, virtue more honourable than the basest vices, a lasting joy to be chosen before an eternal sorrow, much to be preferred before little, certainty before danger, eternity before moments, then let us sit down in religion, and make heaven to be our end, God to be our Father, Christ our Elder Brother, the Holy Ghost the earnest of our inheritance, virtue to be our employment, and then we shall never enter into the portion of fools and accursed ill-choosing spirits. One drop of prudence is more useful than an ocean of smooth fortune: for prudence is a rare instrument towards heaven; and a great fortune is made oftentimes the highway to hell and destruction.—
J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 7.

Guide me, O my Saviour, guide,
Till the storms of life are past.

So have I seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge, seemed a danger; and yet all

the while they were as safe as if they sat under a tree while a gentle wind shook the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade. And the unskilful, unexperienced Christian shrieks out whenever his vessel shakes; and yet all his danger is in himself, none at all from without: for he is indeed moving upon the waters, but fastened to a rock. Faith is his foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country; and all the evils of poverty, of fears and sadder apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point; they make a noise and drive faster to the harbour. And we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended with the world.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 8.

I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.

HOSEA xi. 4.

Draw me to Thee, O Lord,

Draw me to Thee:

Oh! by a cord that's strong,

Whate'er it be.

I cannot keep me close;

Life's stormy sea

Drifts, drifts me out afar,

Away from Thee.

I cannot keep me close;

And yet I see

There is no rest or hope,

Apart from Thee.

I will not murmur, Lord,
Whate'er it be,
So that the cord is strong
That binds to Thee.

D.

NOVEMBER 9.

Seek ye the Lord while He may found.—ISAIAH lv. 6.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone,
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And, such well pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touched from heaven. . . .
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise.
Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.

COWPER.

NOVEMBER 10.

In all time of our tribulation, good Lord, deliver us.

We all know, in a general way, that the word "tribulation," which occurs not seldom in Scripture and in the Liturgy, means affliction, sorrow, anguish. Let us question this word a little closer. It is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which was the threshing instrument, or roller, whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks: and *tribulatio* in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But since Latin writers of the Christian Church appropriated the word and the image for the setting forth of a higher truth; and sorrow, and distress, and adversity being the appointed means for the separation in men of whatever in them was light, trivial, and poor from the solid and the true, their chaff from their wheat, therefore he called these sorrows and trials "tribulations;" threshings, that is, of the inner, spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner.—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 11.

I will meditate on Thy precepts.—PSALM cxix. 15.

How many are there of us before whom the whole sacred history and its doctrines float with all the indistinctness of a confused and misty vision, leaving but a vague and dull impression, such as intelligent men would never be content to have

received in any matter of mere human interest to which their attention had been drawn. There is not more difference in the study of ordinary history—between that vague catalogue of the names of kings, and the dates of their births and deaths, with which the memories of children are often unwisely burdened, and that clear picture of men's thoughts and deeds and mode of living, which an intelligent student delights to form, from the annals and private memoirs of an age which has excited his keenest interest—than there is between the dull assent which most men give, as a matter of course, to what the Bible tells them, and that lively conception of all its varied truths, which a soul, at once faithful and intelligent, may, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, gain from an earnest study of the whole Bible, with all those many human aids which God provides for us.—TAIT.

NOVEMBER 12.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.—PROVERBS iv. 14.

There is a proverb, often taken lightly enough upon the lips, "Talk of the devil and he is sure to appear," which yet contains truth serious and important enough, if we would only give heed to it; it contains, in fact, a very solemn warning against a very dangerous sin. I mean curiosity about evil. There is a fearful response which the evil we may hear or read about is in danger of finding in our own hearts. This danger, then, assuredly makes it

true wisdom to avoid knowing or learning about the evil, especially when neither duty nor necessity oblige them thereto. And, certainly, there is a remarkable commentary on this proverb, so interpreted, in the earnest warning given to the children of Israel, that they should not so much as *inquire* how the nations which were before them in Canaan served their gods—with what cruelties, with what abominable impurities—lest through this inquiry they should be entangled in the same. They were not to talk about the devil, lest he should appear to them.—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 13.

And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates.—DEUTERONOMY xi. 20.

The Christians of the early days were not unwise in seeking to embody spiritual lessons from the Bible in their works of art. . . . The adornments of our own churches, memorials of this sacred teaching, are felt by all of us not to be useless in winning the heart to holy thought. Our fathers of the Puritan time, afraid of the old symbolism, still did not discard a like help. The inscription over the doorway, marking to whom those who planned it looked for a blessing on their work, "Unless the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it;" the bedchamber, with its oak panels emblazoned, "I will lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety;" or the ceiling

of the hall of entertainment, preaching from the 145th Psalm, "The eyes of all wait upon Thee," etc. Who does not recognize in all these a calm, reverential sense of our dependence on the teaching of God's Word, and a desire to fulfil Moses' injunctions that His precepts may be always present to our eyes, and thus sink into our hearts—a desire, indeed, that the word of Christ may dwell among us and in us abundantly; the same desire which dictated the reading of some grave, godly lesson from the lectern by the dais in the halls of old monasteries, that the thought of Christ's word might check irreverent mirth.—TAIT.

NOVEMBER 14.

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so God hath willed, we die?

KEBLE.

We are wont, and not unnaturally, to regard the death of Moses as something altogether unlike the deaths of other men. And so, in a sense, it was. The summons to that solitary mountain, every friend and companion left behind, alone with God in that awful solitude,—all this is his and no other's. There was, indeed, something unique in the manner of his departure. And yet look at it in another point of view, and what was it but the solitude of every death-bed? "I shall die alone;" these were the words of the great Pascal; and they are true of every man. We may *live* with others, but we must *die* by ourselves. Millions may have gone before us, and

millions may follow after ; but each one of us must gird himself for that tremendous journey alone ; not Moses more lonely on the peak of Nebo. Nor of all those weeping ones that stand around our couch can one, even if he would, take a single step of that journey with us ;—alone, unless One be with us, a Conqueror of Hades, a Prince of Life, who with His rod and staff can comfort those who pass even through the darkest valley of the shadow of death.
—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 15.

Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ?—LUKE x. 40.

“O sister, leave you thus undone
The bidding of the Lord ?
Or call you this a welcome ? Run,
And deck with me the board.”
Thus Martha spake : but spake to one
Who answered not a word ;
For she kept ever singing,
“There is no joy so sweet
As musing upon One we love,
And sitting at His feet.”

“O sister, must my hands alone
His board and bath prepare ?
His eyes are on you ! raise your own ;
He'll find a welcome there !”
Thus spake again, in loftier tone,
That Hebrew woman fair ;
But Mary still kept singing,
“There is no joy so sweet
As musing upon Him we love,
And resting at His feet.”

A. DE VEE.

NOVEMBER 16.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air.

MONTGOMERY.

Prayer is an action, and a state of intercourse and desire, exactly contrary to the character of anger. Prayer is an action of likeness to the Holy Ghost, the spirit of gentleness, and dove-like simplicity; an imitation of the Holy Jesus, whose spirit is meek up to the greatness of the biggest example, and a conformity to God, whose anger is always just, and marches slowly, and is often hindered, and never hasty, and is full of mercy. Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calmness of our tempest. Prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like one that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 17.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.—JAMES iv. 7.

Whatsoever temptation we can be troubled withal through our natural temper or the condition of our life, so long as we have capacity to feel it, so long we are in danger, and must watch thereunto with prayer and continual diligence. And when your temptations let you alone, do not let your God alone; but lay up prayers and the blessings of constant devotion against the day of trial. Well may your temptations sleep; but if your prayers do so, you may chance to be awakened with an assault that may ruin you. However, the rule is easy. Whatsoever you need, ask it of God, so long as you want it, even till you have it. For God many times defers to grant, that thou mayst persevere to ask; and because every holy prayer is a glorification of God by the confessing many of His attributes, a lasting and a persevering prayer is a little image of the Hallelujahs and services of eternity. It is a continuation to do that, according to our measure, which we shall be doing to eternal ages.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 18.

From the crafts and assaults of the devil, good Lord, deliver us.
LITANY.

Every step is a danger for a valiant man when he walks in his enemy's country; and so it is with us. We are espied by God, and observed by angels; we

are betrayed within, and assaulted without. The devil is our enemy, and we are fond of his mischiefs; he is crafty, and we love to be abused; he is malicious, and we are credulous; he is powerful, and we are weak; he is too ready of himself, and yet we desire to be tempted; the world is alluring, and we consider not its vanity; sin puts on all pleasures, and yet we take it, though it puts us to pain; in short, we are vain, and credulous, and sensual, and trifling; we are tempted, and tempt ourselves; and we sin frequently, and contract evil habits, and they become second natures, and bring in a second death, miserable and eternal. Every man hath need to fear, because every man hath weakness, and enemies, and temptations, and dangers, and causes of his own. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 19.

Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.—JOHN xv. 2.

For so have I known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press, and a faint return to his heart which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage; but when the lord of the vineyard hath caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant and make it bleed, it grew temperate of its vain expense

of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy branches, and made account of that loss of blood by the return of fruit.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 20.

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect rest above.

KEBLE.

God hath opened all the windows of heaven, and sent the Sun of Righteousness with glorious apparition; and hath discovered the abysses of His own wisdom, made the second Person of the Trinity to be the doctor and preacher of His sentences and secrets, and the third Person to be His amanuensis or scribe, and our hearts to be the book in which the doctrine is written, and miracles and prophecies to be its arguments, and all the world to be the verification of it; and those leaves contain within their fold all that excellent morality which right reason picked up after the shipwreck of nature, and all those wise sayings which singly made so many men famous for preaching some one of them; all them Christ gathered, and added some more out of the immediate book of revelation. This hath God done for us; and see, what do we do for Him? We stand in our own light and quench God's; we love darkness more than light, and entertain ourselves accordingly. Alas! my God, help us; for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 21.

My song shall be of mercy and judgment.—PSALM ci. 1.

These are the great degrees of God's forwardness and readiness to forgive, for the expression of which no language is sufficient but God's own words, describing mercy in all those dimensions which can signify to us its greatness and infinity. His mercy "is great;" His mercies "are many;" His "mercy reacheth unto the heaven;" it "fills heaven and earth;" it is "above all His works;" it "endureth for ever." "God pitieth us, as a father doth his children;" nay, He is our Father, and the same also is the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" so that mercy and we have the same relation. And well it may be so, for we live and die together: for as to man only God shows the mercy of forgiveness, so, if God takes away His mercy, man shall be no more; no more capable of felicity, or of anything that is perfective of his condition or his person. But, as God preserves man by His mercy, so His mercy hath all its operations upon man. "Praise," then, "the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 22.

She hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.—LUKE vii. 44.

He prized her love, He held it dear,
He felt each ministering touch,
He marked each gift she offered there,
He cared that she should love Him "*much*."

His pity was no careless alms
The happy to the wretched fling ;
He prized her love, her tears, her balms—
Then life was yet a precious thing ;

Precious the love he held of price,
Precious each moment which might bring
Some privilege of sacrifice,
Some vase to break in offering.

And God gives evermore like this ;
Gives by His measure, not by ours.
By life means not mere *being*, but *bliss* ;
The exercise of joyful powers.

The freedom with which He makes free
Is freedom of His home above ;
Not merely liberty to *be*,
But liberty to serve and love.

MRS. CHARLES.

NOVEMBER 23.

Lift up Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth.—PSALM xciv. 2.

Some of the noblest proverbs in every language are those embodying men's confidence in God's moral government of the world—His avenging righteousness—however much there may be in the confessions of the present evil day to tempt them to doubt or to deny it. Thus, "Punishment is lame, but it comes ;" or this ancient Greek one, "The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder,"—which brings in the further thought, that God's judgments, however long they tarry, yet, when they arrive, are crushing ones. Then how awfully sublime is another, which has come down to us as part of the wisdom

of the ancient heathen world—I mean the following : “The feet of the (avenging) deities are shod with wool.” Here a new thought is introduced—the noiseless approach and advance of these judgments. As noiseless as the steps of one whose feet were wrapped in wool; the manner in which they overtake secure sinners, even in the hour of their utmost security. Who that has studied the history of the great crimes and criminals of the world, but will, with a shuddering awe, set his seal to the truth of this proverb?—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 24.

Thy sacred unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

The Spirit of God is given to all that truly belong to Christ as an antidote against sorrows, against impatience, against the evil accidents of the world, and against the oppression and the sinking of our spirits under the cross. There is a certain joy and spiritual rejoicing that accompanies them in whom the Holy Ghost doth dwell; a joy in the midst of sorrows, a joy given to allay the sorrows of secular troubles. Worldly afflictions and spiritual joys may very well dwell together; and if God did not supply us out of His storehouses, the sorrows of this world would be more and unmingled. The spirit of comfort is the hope and confidence, the certain expectation, of the inheritance of Jesus; this is the faith and patience of the saints; this is the refresh-

ment of all weary travellers, the anchor of timorous and fluctuating souls, and the confidence and staff of the penitent.—J. TAYLOR.

NOVEMBER 25.

If any man obey not our word . . . count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.—2 THESSALONIANS iii. 14, 15.

He cannot be an earnest Christian, who knows his own heart and life to labour under great defects, and is not striving, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to correct them. And so is it as to things without ourselves. Our Lord wept over the rebellious and hard-hearted sinfulness of Jerusalem; and His chosen servant Paul had "his spirit stirred within him as he beheld the city of Athens wholly given to idolatry." And he cannot be a really earnest disciple of the one, or fellow-servant of the other, who, passing through the world, sees sin at every turn, and is not labouring to remove it; who hears the light or irreverend jest, or the words that profane God's Holy Name, and takes no step to mark his disapproval. . . . If we be earnest Christians we must allow no such thing to pass, but ever make a bold and determined stand for God and goodness. For, sure, experience teaches that every time we see evils without an exertion to oppose them, they lose in our eyes part of their deformity, and become every day more endurable the more we are accustomed to them.—TAIT.

NOVEMBER 26.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.—REVELATION xxii. 13.

Yet through all the variety of Old Testament and New we cannot fail to note the perfect, all-pervading unity. There are the same lessons of holy living; the same truths as to God's nature and man's—more clearly marked, indeed, and of a deeper colouring, as the tide of revelation swells, but still substantially the same; the same struggle of the fallen human race with its great adversary is shadowed forth in all. But, above all, the whole Scripture is made one by the one holy image which every page reflects—the one Jesus Christ, Himself the author and the subject of the whole; of whom Genesis speaks as the first Creator, and the Apocalypse as the final Judge; of whom every good man in its history is the type; whose sufferings and victory every prophet foretells; whose glory is hymned in every song of praise; who is set forth as by His Spirit alone giving the power to obey each practical lesson and understand each doctrine. Thus the whole Bible is, as it were, one heavenly instrument of music tuned to sing the glory of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And it has its harmony from the very variety of the notes which are blended in its symphony; and each ear which God's Holy Spirit has prepared to love the sound has its own peculiar note in which it especially delights.—TAIT.

NOVEMBER 27.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.—2 TIMOTHY ii. 15.

If, indeed, the literature of a nation were merely the amusement of the cultivated few, the ornament of their idler hours, then what the fashion of it might be, or what manner of men they were who formed it for us, would be of very slight importance indeed. But a nation's literature is very much more than this. The work of its noblest and most gifted sons, the utterance of all that has been deepest and nearest to their hearts, it evokes and interprets the unuttered greatness which is latent in others, but which, except for them, would never have come to the birth. By it the mighty heart of a people may be animated and quickened to heroic enterprise and worthiest endeavour. With the breath of strong and purifying emotions, it can stir to a healthy activity the waters of a nation's life, which would else have stagnated, and putrefied, and corrupted. Having such offices, being capable of such effects as these, of what vast concern it is that it should deal with the loftiest problems which man's existence presents; solve them, as far as they are capable of solution here; point to a solution beyond the veil where this only is possible: that, whatever it handles, things high or things low, things eternal or things temporal, spiritual or natural, it should be sound, it should be healthy;

clear, so far as possible, from offence; enlisting our sympathies on the side of the just, the pure, and the true.—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 28.

Though dark my path, and drear my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not,
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
"Thy will be done."

If we look around us, and examine closely the lot and condition of most men, even of those who seem the most signally favoured of fortune, we may in almost every case perceive that their happiness is not complete and full-orbed; or, if it appear so for a moment, like the moon at the full, presently the shadows begin to encroach, and there is a rim of dark, larger or smaller, on the orb of every man's joy. Something is wanting to every man, even to him whom the world counts most favoured of all. He is rich, but a stranger, it may be, shall inherit all that he has. He is famous in the world, but has no joy at his domestic hearth. A noble career opens to him, but health fails, and he must renounce it. Fortune seems to give everything, but yet, in a strange irony, withholds the one thing which would make all the rest to have any true value. Everywhere something absent whose presence would have been desired; something present which would have been wished away; some good thing withheld, or some sad thing added to every man's condition; in other words, "some thorn in the flesh." It is

sometimes evident to all the world; in other cases the world knows nothing about it, and none except the sufferer himself knows. . . . But this "thorn in the flesh" is the appointed means to keep us low, to prevent us from yielding ourselves to the world altogether; to remind us that we are sinners, and can only look in this present time for a sinner's doom: that it is which shall bring us in right earnest to the throne of grace, and make us to desire a better country and a heavenly.—TRENCH.

NOVEMBER 29.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord.—1 THESSALONIANS iv. 17.

Still, still with Thee—when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness,—I am with Thee!

Alone with Thee—amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born;
Alone with Thee, in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

Still, still with Thee! as to each new-born morning
A fresh and solemn splendour still is given,
So does this blessed consciousness awaking,
Breathe, each day, nearness unto Thee and heaven.

When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber,
Its closing eye looks up to Thee in prayer,
Sweet the repose beneath Thy wings o'ershading,
But sweeter still, to wake and find Thee there.

So shall it be at last, in that bright morning,
When the soul waketh, and the shadows flee;
Oh! in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought,—I am with Thee!

H. B. STOWE.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

NOVEMBER 30.

I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.—PSALM cxix. 63.

The history of the lives of God's eminent saints, whether written in the Bible or elsewhere, whether they lived long since or in times and in a state of society similar to our own, we shall do well to study; for, by dwelling on their excellence, we shall be most likely to imbibe a portion of their spirit. The mantle of the prophet descended upon him who had long been his companion; and whether they be God's living servants, or those that are dead, whom we would imitate, we must know their thoughts and be much in their society, before we can follow in their steps. This advice, then, to study the history of God's servants departed, leads to another, to seek much the company of those who are still living. A man cannot mix intimately in any society, religious or worldly, without being sooner or later influenced by the spirit that prevails in it. Hence, if we would have our souls filled with Christian zeal, we must not only flee from the company of the careless and profane, but strive to join in acknowledged intimate union with zealous Christian friends.—TAYLOR.

DECEMBER 1.

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.—MATTHEW xii. 37.

Let no man think it a light matter that he spend his precious time in idle words; let no man be so weary of what flies away too fast, and cannot be recalled, as to use arts and devices to pass the time away in vanity, which might be rarely spent in the interests of eternity. Time is given us to repent in; to appease the divine anger; to prepare for and hasten to the society of angels; to stir up our slackened wills, and enkindle our cold devotions; to weep for our daily iniquities, and to sigh after and work for the restitution of our lost inheritance. And the reward is very inconsiderable that exchanges all this for the pleasure of a voluble tongue; this is a throwing away something of that which is to be expended for eternity. This and many other evils, and the perpetual necessity of sinning by much talking, hath given great advantages to silence, and made it to be esteemed an act of discipline and great religion.—J. TAYLOR.

DECEMBER 2.

The spring of the regenerate heart,
The pulse, the glow of every part,
Is the true love of Christ our Lord,
As man embraced, as God adored.

KEBLE.

The only preservation from the withering of the heart is love. Love is its own perennial fount of strength. The strength of affection is a proof, not

of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater mind cleaves to the smaller with more force than the other to it. A parent loves the child more than the child the parent; and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because His heart was infinitely larger. Love trusts on—ever hopes and expects better things—and this, a trust springing from itself and out of its own depths alone. And it is this *trusting love* that makes men what they are trusted to be. Would you make men trustworthy? Trust them. Would you make them true? Believe them.—ROBERTSON.

DECEMBER 3.

Life is real! life is earnest!

We must strive to make ourselves acquainted with the stern realities of life. It is in affliction that men most feel their need of an earnest Christian heart to support them. Now, truly, it may well be expected that every one of us must before death have his full share of afflictions. But there are seasons, and especially in prosperous youth, when life seems nothing but a pleasant day-dream. We hear, indeed, that there are such things in the world

as cruel oppression and lingering sickness, and lonely bereavement, and sharp penury and hunger; but they rarely come in our way, and we cannot fully realize to ourselves what is meant by the terms. So that we are in great danger of thinking that, after all, the world is not so poor an inheritance, and of not seeing the necessity for earnestly turning to something far better. Now, there is no surer way by which we may rouse ourselves from this dreaming delusion, than by seeking out the abodes of the misery of others, while as yet, by God's mercy, we are ourselves still prosperous.—TAIT.

DECEMBER 4.

Behold your King!—JOHN xix. 14.

In actual experience no life is wholly surrendered to the sway, either of the kingdom of Christ, or of the kingdom of this world. Motives, actions, characters, in *real* life, are all more or less mixed. The worst have traits of goodness. The best have at least the scars of conquered evils. The pure light of Christ's kingdom, passing through the refracting medium even of the noblest and loftiest characters, is crossed by many a band of inky darkness. Yet still, the weight of every human soul—the momentum of every human life—is flung distinctly and unmistakably, in its net result, either on Christ's side or on Caesar's. Now, into which of the two scales are we flinging the weight, such as it is, of our poor lives? Are we hindering or helping

the cause of Christ? Helping, not hindering, the cause of His enemies? Choose rightly, O my brothers, and *choose now*.—DR. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 5.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.
2 CORINTHIANS i. 12.

Wouldest thou be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for His name? Then make much of a trembling heart and conscience; a hard heart can do nothing with the word of Jesus Christ. Keep, then, thy conscience awake with wrath and grace, with heaven and hell, but let grace and heaven bear sway. Paul made much of a tender conscience, else he had never done as he did, nor suffered what we read of. "And herein," saith he, "do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and towards men." But this could not a stony, benumbed, bribed, deluded, or a muzzled conscience do. Paul was like the nightingale with his breast against the thorn. That his heart might still keep waking he would accustom himself to the meditation of those things that should beget both love and fear, and would always be very chary lest he offended his conscience.—BUNYAN.

DECEMBER 6.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
GALATIANS vi. 2.

It is long before we understand that evils arising from no fault of our own, that the sins and infirmities of other men, are part of God's appointed discipline, intended to act as a special chastening for the attainment of the higher forms of sanctity. We readily perceive that it is a righteous thing to suffer the consequences of our own faults, and to be patient under our own infirmity. We are large in our expectations that others should bear with us, and are provoked if they fail in inconsiderateness for our imperfections. We are angry if they are imperfect, indignant if they do not sympathize with us, even in our most trifling annoyances. We are slow to apprehend that these "pricks in our eyes and thorns in our sides" are God's own instruments, fraught with unspeakable virtue if we use them aright, for the attainment of great spiritual improvement, through the constant self-discipline which their endurance requires; even as they are the occasions and provocations of unceasing sin if we refuse to bear with others as we need to be borne with ourselves. All external circumstances, whether direct from God, or indirect through man, are component parts of that furnace through which our nature is passing, and in which, if at all, our sanctification is to be attained.

DECEMBER 7.

But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of
Israel.—PSALM xxii. 3.

The praise of God is the very highest of all the employments in which the faculties of man can be exercised. It stands above prayer; it stands above thanksgiving; it stands even above intercession. Prayer is asking for the supply of wants. Thanksgiving is the acknowledging of wants satisfied. Intercession is asking for the supply of others' wants. All these things, therefore, have their home and their bound in the present. In a word, where there is no want, prayer and intercession and thanksgiving will rest being fulfilled. But praise is different from all these. Praise never faileth. Praise is the telling forth, not of what God has done, but of what God is. Praise is the losing oneself in God. Praise is the absorption of every faculty in the thought, in the contemplation, and the investigation, in the admiration of the fulness of grace and glory which is in God Himself. Praise is the last and best, the most difficult and the most exalted, the most self-abasing and the most self-forgetting of all possible exercises of the human faculties in the service of the Divine Father and Redeemer and Sanctifier.—
DR. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 8.

Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad.
Silence accompanied ; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk—all but the wakeful nightingale ;
She all night long her amorous descant sang.
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires. Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

MILTON.

DECEMBER 9.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of
man which is in him ?—1 CORINTHIANS ii. 11.

How wonderfully, as we go on through life, its utter solitude grows upon us ! No one on a desert island could be more lonely than we are often, when surrounded by friends. Who knows us ? Not even those who seem to know us best. We feel that we are always being thought better or worse than we deserve : that which we do with a mixed motive is praised ; that which costs us much goes unheeded, and to no one have we the power of explaining ourselves. Two friends live together ; they believe they are intimate the one with the other. Can either tell what has been, for one day only, occupying the heart and thoughts of the other ? They may think and judge from what has been communicated to

them; but do we not usually speak from the surface of our hearts, and are not our actions, feelings, and sympathies welling out from some hidden spring known only to ourselves? Our struggles, our hopes, our disappointments, our faithlessness, falls, and endeavours, who knows them? Only when, on our knees, we say, "O God, Thou knowest all," do we feel that we are fully and rightly understood, and receive in silence a sympathy more deep and satisfying than any human being can give.

DECEMBER 10.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.—ISAIAH xvi. 3.

Peace is promised to those whose hearts are stayed on God. What, then, is the nature of this possession, so wonderfully bestowed and preserved to us by God Himself? Peace is that settled, calm happiness which is more quiet and lasting than joy—more noble and worthy than pleasure. Pleasure may make us for a time forget pain, and a passing joy may take for a moment the place of a passing sorrow; but peace is deeper than these. Search the heart in which true peace dwells, and you will find it reaching down to the centre of life itself: pleasure, pain, joy, and sorrow may come and go, but peace abides through all. It is remarkable that in the books and in the talk of the men of this world you rarely find the word "peace." They seem to have found the thing itself beyond their reach;

the life of peace appears to them an impossible condition here. You sometimes hear them speak of a tranquil life, but that only means a freedom from external disturbances. Now, the peaceful life of a faithful Christian is not one always of outward quietness ; it may be one of constant, busy employment. We have each of us our work to do, and much of this work may be fatiguing, troublesome, full of interruptions, distasteful in itself ; and so we may lead anything but what the world means by a tranquil life ; and yet it may be full of peace.

DECEMBER 11.

For to me . . . to die is gain.—PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

Not only in the heavenly life will there be perfect development of our wondrous nature, but, with this development, there comes the satisfaction of the wants of man. To develop, and not to satisfy, were but to intensify human sorrow by the increase of human wants. There, before the throne, the wants of the intellect are satisfied as they can never be on earth. Grand is the field that is opened up to human thoughts as it gazes round on creation, and reads its mysteries in the light of God, or passes from the creature to the Creator to contemplate God. There, before the throne, the yearnings of the heart are stilled. There the heart, which is created with capacities to love God, finds the satisfaction of its fully developed powers in the love of God. There the faithful departed of every time shall be

loved perfectly in God. There the heart loves restfully, for there is no cause for restlessness in the loves of heaven. There, again, is the full satisfaction of our bodily nature. The body is the organ of expression to mind and heart, and it is in ministering to them that its satisfaction is found. But there each member of the body in the service of God finds a sphere worthy of itself, and breathes forth the convictions of the mind and the affections of the heart.

DECEMBER 12.

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.

EXODUS xiv. 15.

Let us go forward, for the faith in a risen Christ is nothing to us, except we go forward in the strength of it. The command to "go forward" must have seemed to Israel, in that hour of wild terror and peril, impossible to obey. The onward way lay right through the waves of the great sea. But ere their feet touched the water, the way was opened before them, and forward they went. And so it will be with us. Our way lies through a sea of difficulties, trials, temptations—waves of a troublesome world—known only to God and ourselves. Sometimes we shrink back in dismay at the prospect of them. But, as we go resolutely forward, still looking to Jesus Christ, the waves will part and divide, and the way will be open before us to the land of freedom beyond. We know not what we can do, and dare, and

bear until we have actually tried. The promise is, "As thy day thy strength shall be." The assurance is, "My grace is sufficient for thee."—DR. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 13.

Let us watch and be sober.—1 THESSALONIANS v. 6.

If time is the opportunity and measure of growth, what a work have we to perform in it! How should we strive to store it full with deeds which may indeed abide! At the best, how large a portion of our short lives is ravished from us! How much is lost for its greatest purposes in sleep; how much more well-nigh lost in our needful recreations, in the repairs of the mere waste of the body, in the demands of society, in the troublesome business of others, in the fretting sore of perpetual interruptions! How little is there which we can be possibly building in for our eternal habitation! How few and how short are the hours of prayer, and meditation, and communion with ourselves and God; of self-denial and earnest service! How should we strive, then, to "redeem the time, because the days are evil;" to have some golden counterpart of some hour of every day stored for us in the everlasting habitations!—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

DECEMBER 14.

The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.—GENESIS xlviii. 15, 16.

There is a difference deep as eternity between natural attractivenesses and the true character of redeemed humanity, wrought by however slow degrees in the servant of God by the regenerating, renewing influences of the Holy Ghost. It is best, after all, to be indeed on God's side in this world. Brightly as the morning of the man of the world may glow with all the glorious colours of the molten light, it must end in darkness. Showy and attractive as are youthful frankness, joyousness, and daring, there is a poison which pervades and at last destroys all worldly things which are not sanctified by the presence of God; whilst the path of those who walk with God is like the shining light, which shineth ever more and more unto the perfect day. As Jacob draws nearer to his end, the halo round his withered brow glows with yet brighter colours. The sorrows of the past are a departing vision. All, one by one, melt away in the distance. The one remaining and ever-increasing idea of that life is the presence of God with it; the vision before his going down into Egypt gradually expands over and covers the canvas. Other voices die away; this only he hears: "I am God, the God of thy fathers; fear not." And round his dying bed the powers of the world to come arrayed themselves, and then fell on

him the breath of clear, exalted prophecy. From the shadows of his own coming end, his eye ranged on along the ages, until, in prophetic foresight, he saw the conqueror of death; and then, after that, what could he do more than gather up his feet into the bed, and yield up the ghost?—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

DECEMBER 15.

Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it.

My soul, there is a country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend,
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One who never changes—
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

H. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 16.

Wilt Thou not revive us again; or, Wilt Thou not turn again,
and quicken us?—PSALM lxxv. 6.

Life, as a matter of fact, is, as a general rule, made up of long level interspaces, only here and there crossed and relieved by some elevation of incident, or by some special upward spring of hope and thought. Those long level interspaces try our hardihood, our patience, our courage, our resolution, sorely. The cry of the heart then is, or at least ought to be, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" For what we want is life—*more life*. Life in the truest sense of the word, proving itself to be life by its power of endurance, of effort, of aspiration. And who can give us this life, and to whom shall we go for it, and where is the fountain of it? Is there any reason why the *Thou* of our text should be less emphatic to us than it was to the Psalmist? Let the cross of Christ answer the question. If God could be thought of and trusted by the Psalmist as a *Saviour*, how much more by *us*? If the Psalmist might pray, "Wilt not *Thou* revive us?" much more may we do so.—DR. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 17.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
GALATIANS vi. 7.

Oh the solemn, the tremendous issues of the life that now is! If in one sense each day we live is a distinct unit, for the supply of the wants of which

we ask God and trust Him implicitly with the morrow, in another sense the whole life of man is a continuous, an unbroken chain, each link of which is firmly rivetted into the link that follows. Now we are sowing ; one day we shall reap. Nay, nay ; we are reaping too. Each day that we live is bearing fruit in the next, and that in eternity. Thoughts are telling upon mind, words upon character, acts upon life ; and the product of all these is the immortal man, hewn and shaped, by his own workmanship, into a temple of the evil one, or else a habitation of God.—DR. VAUGHAN.

DECEMBER 18.

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed My voice.—GENESIS xxii. 18.

The special purpose of the sacred records of the life of Abraham is written plain upon their surface. They are chosen with the one plain purpose of illustrating, in this chiefest example, the life of faith. They show us its root in the word of Jehovah ; its fruit in simple obedience, in the grandeur of an unfaltering trust, in the fulness of a life of sacrifice ; they show us its nourishment in secret communings with God, its reward in the gift of righteousness, and with that the promised inheritance of the world. But, whilst the great purpose of the sacred narrative is to show us how this grand faith was formed, perfected, and crowned in Abraham, enough besides this is left on record to

exhibit him as a real man, and not an imaginary figure. Thus we see him, not only in his acts and communings as the friend of God, but also on his earthly side; in his intercourse with his immediate kindred on earth, with those in whose borders he sojourned, or with whom the events of his life brought him into contact. All of these wear the same character. He is the great sheik—grand, generous, powerful; when necessary, warlike, and always munificent.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

DECEMBER 19.

King of kings, and Lord of lords.—REVELATION xix. 16.

Come then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was Thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with Thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and Thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of Thy last advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.

COWPER.

DECEMBER 20.

And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.—
JUDGES xvi. 25.

Among all that thronging, garrulous crowd, Samson is alone with his God. Blindness, sorrow, captivity, and loneliness have done their work upon that solitary man. All his great soul is turned inward. He scarcely sees or hears anything around him. His thoughts are with the past; with the days of his Nazarite youth; with his early associations; with his witness for his God; with his wanderings from Him. What is there yet that he can do, what is there that he can suffer for that Lord? Has the God, in whom he now has learned was all his early strength—has He come to him again? He puts forth out of his deep heart the cry for one more gift of strength, whereby the cruel sacrifice of his own eyesight may be avenged, whereby the enemies of Israel may be humbled, wherewith Jehovah may yet triumph over Dagon. He prays his last prayer; offers to his God his life; grasps with those arms of iron the massive central columns which support the roof, and bows himself with all his might. There is a shaking of the pillars, a cry of terror—a wild rush beginning—and on it all settles down, with one loud crash, the vast proportions of the crumbling building. At last Jehovah has triumphed; Dagon has fallen before the God of Israel. The Hebrew judge has indeed

wrought the destruction of the Philistines. "The dead which he slew in his death were more than they which he slew in his life."—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

ST. THOMAS'S DAY.

DECEMBER 31.

Be not faithless, but believing.—JOHN xx. 27.

How oft, O Lord, Thy face hath shone
On doubting souls whose wills were true!
Thou Christ of Cephias and of John,
Thou art the Christ of Thomas too.

He loved Thee well, and calmly said,
"Come, let us go and die with Him;"
Yet when Thine Easter news was spread,
'Mid all its light, his eyes were dim.

His brethren's word he would not take,
But craved to touch those hands of Thine;
The bruised reed Thou didst not break;
He saw, and hailed his Lord Divine.

He saw Thee risen: at once he rose
To full belief's unclouded height;
And still through his confession flows
To Christian souls Thy life and light.

O Saviour, make Thy presence known
To all who doubt Thy word and Thee;
And teach them in that word alone
To find the truth that sets them free.

DECEMBER 22.

And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash
His feet with tears.—LUKE vii. 38.

She bathed His feet with many a tear,
Feet wearied then for us so oft ;
She wiped them with her flowing hair,
Embalmed with reverend touches soft.

She knew not of the bitter way
Those sacred feet had yet to tread,
Nor how the nails would pierce one day
Where now her costly balms were shed.

She read the pity in His eyes,
To peace transmuting her despair ;
She could not read what agonies
Must cloud the heaven she gazed on there.

He praised her love, her sacrifice,
But breathed not what His own must be ;
Nor hinted what must be the price
Which made her pardon flow so free.

Then, if her love and gifts were such,
Who little knew the depths of His ;
If then, indeed, she "*loved Him much,*"
How ! since she knows Him as He is ?

MRS. CHARLES.

DECEMBER 23.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you.—2 CORINTHIANS
xiii. 14.

In the heart of those who often retire from the
littleness of common things into the greatness of
God's presence, there does, of His mercy, grow up

day by day a nobleness of aim, a quiet steadiness of purpose, and a greatness of conduct, which makes them other men to what they were before. Other men they are, too, amongst the changes and chances of this life. For here is the only rest for harassed spirits. The very thought of the deep rest of God's eternity breathes a calm over our minds. Change and uncertainty,—these things vanish of necessity with the thoughts of succession and time; and time and succession are not with God. "He is, He was, He is to come." He is, indeed, the Great Rock under whose shelter the saints have ever rested the burden of their being. For, through Jesus Christ our Lord, this God is our God. This great, this infinite, this unchangeable God, He is our portion. He is ours in the blessedness of His own mysterious nature; ours in the deep mystery of the Trinity; ours as the everlasting Father; one with us in the eternal Son, dwelling within us by the ever-blessed Spirit.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

DECEMBER 24.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.—ISAIAH lvii. 21.

Is there, indeed, anything upon which the spirit can rest, in the harassing and noisy clatter of the greatest success; in its engrossing, dizzying dream; in its difficult and doubtful hold of things which we feel are every day more uncertain, and yet more essential to our happiness? And if this is true as to

the fairest present prosperity, much more is it as to disappointments and sorrows. And who knows not these? Where do they not intrude and darken the bright sunshine over us? Or, if they have not yet come to us, have not the shadows of their approaching presence often fallen on our spirits, and chilled suddenly their summer gladness? Where, then, for the present, or for the future, is peace, but in submission? There can be none without it. So long as to any one of us, be he rich or poor, life is still a game of chance—so long as he is staking his being for any hazard, be it, in the eyes of men, for great stakes, or for small—there can be no peace. There will be excitement, there may be a turbulent joy now and then; and there is sure to be enough of disappointment. There may, perhaps, be madness in the end, but there cannot be peace. It is, indeed, a sight to make a thinking man weep at any time, to look around him anywhere, and see how Satan and the world are befooling souls for which Christ died, and which might find rest in Him.—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

DECEMBER 25.

And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—ISA. ix. 6.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold :

"Peace to the earth, good will to men,
From Heaven's all-gracious King :"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurl'd ;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lonely plains
They bend on heavenly wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Oh ! hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing !
And ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow ;
Look now ! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing :
Oh ! rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing !

For lo, the days are hastening on
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold ;
When Peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

*ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.***DECEMBER 26.**

Whosoever overcomes himself, treads the world underfoot.

Martyrdom is often a battle-field where no clash of earthly combatants is heard; it is often a theatre no wider than a single nameless home. Sometimes it is passive endurance; sometimes it is active opposition; sometimes it is the decided warfare against a tyranny; sometimes it is the stout declaration of a truth; but it is always a firm belief in the eternal distinctions between right and wrong; an evidence of conviction that there are worse evils in life than pain, and poverty, and persecutions; and higher blessings than pleasure, and success, and wealth; worse evils by far than those which the world dreads, and higher blessings by far than those for which it toils. To have the spirit of a martyr—and he who has it will be in the highest sense a martyr—is to be true at all costs to the best and highest things you know. He who willingly, and with no thought of reward, risks his life to save others; he who cheerfully braves loss rather than do what he deems dishonourable; he who faces persecution rather than abandon what he feels to be right—he has the martyr's heart. Only be true to your God, be true to your Saviour, be true to yourselves, be true to the highest that you know, and you, too, each in your turn, each in your measure,

shall have the high honour of helping forward by your example the cause of God, the cause of good; you, too, shall be Christ's witnesses.—FARRAR.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY.

DECEMBER 27.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.—JOHN xxi. 7.

The character of St. John has been often mistaken. Filled as he was, with a most divine tenderness—realizing, as he did to a greater extent than any of the apostles, the full depth and significance of our Saviour's new commandment—rich as his epistles and his gospel are with a meditative and absorbing reverence—yet he was something far removed from that effeminate pietist, which he has been usually represented. The name Boanerges, or "Sons of Thunder," which he shared with his brother James, their joint petition for precedence in the kingdom of God, their passionate request to call down fire from heaven on the offending village of the Samaritans, the burning energy of the *patois* in which the Apocalypse is written, all show that in him was the spirit of the eagle. And since zeal and enthusiasm have ever been indispensable instruments in spreading the kingdom of heaven, doubtless it was the existence of these elements in his character side by side with tenderness and devotion, which endeared him so greatly to his Master, and made him the "disciple whom Jesus loved." The perfect faith

which inspired his devotion, and the perfect love which precluded fear—these were the gifts and graces which rendered him worthy of leaning his young head on the bosom of the Lord.—FARRAR.

THE INNOCENTS' DAY.

DECEMBER 28.

These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb.—REVELATION xiv. 4.

Say, ye celestial guards who wait
In Bethlehem round the Saviour's palace gate,
Say, who are these on golden wings,
That hover o'er the new-born King of kings;
Their palms and garlands telling plain
That they are of the glorious martyr train;
Next to yourselves ordained to praise
His Name, and brighten as on Him they gaze?

But where their spoils and trophies? Where
The glorious dint a martyr's shield should wear?
How chance no cheek among them wears
The deep-worn trace of penitential tears,
But all is bright and smiling love,
As if, fresh borne from Eden's happy grove,
They had flown here, their King to see,
Nor ever had been heirs of dark mortality?

Ask, and some angel will reply,
"These, like yourselves, were born to sin and die;
But, ere the poison-root was grown,
God set His seal, and mark'd them for His own.
Baptized in blood for Jesus' sake,
Now underneath the cross their bed they make;
Not to be scared from that sure rest
By frighten'd mothers' shriek, or warriors' waving crest."

Mindful of thee, the firstfruits sweet
Borne by the suffering Church her Lord to greet,
Bless'd Jesus ever loved to trace
The "innocent brightness" of an infant's face :
He raised them in His holy arms,
He bless'd them from the world and all its harms ;
Heirs though they were of sin and shame,
He bless'd them in His own, and in His Father's Name.

KEBLE.

DECEMBER 29.

O Heavenly Father, have compassion, I humbly beseech Thee, upon me, Thy afflicted servant, encompassed with sin and infirmity, tempest-tossed and weary, sorely beset by my spiritual enemies.

Have pity upon me.

O Blessed Sun of Righteousness, hear me, I pray Thee, in this my hour of darkness. I cannot see Thee, cannot find Thee. In Thine own time shine into my soul, and give me light, and love, and hope.

Have pity upon me.

O Holy Ghost, the Comforter, strengthen me, I beseech Thee, in this time of trouble. "My soul melteth away for very heaviness: comfort Thou me according to Thy word."

Have pity upon me.

DECEMBER 30.

Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good : sing praises unto His name; for it is pleasant—PSALM cxxxv. 3.

Chorus.

Let all the world in every corner sing
My God and King.

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither flie;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the earth in every corner sing
My God and King.

The Church with psalms must shout,
No doore can keep them out:
But, above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the earth in every corner sing
My God and King.

HERBERT.

DECEMBER 31.

Come, Holy Spirit, from above,
And from the realms of light and love
Thine own bright rays impart.
Come, Father of the fatherless,
Come, Giver of all happiness,
Come, Lamp of every heart.

O Thou, of comforters the best,
O Thou, the soul's most welcome guest,
O Thou, our sweet repose,
Our resting-place from life's long care,
Our shadow from the world's fierce glare,
Our solace in all woes.

O Light Divine, all light excelling,
Fill with Thyself the inmost dwelling
Of souls sincere and lowly :
Without Thy pure divinity,
Nothing in all humanity,
Nothing is strong or holy.

Wash out each dark and sordid stain,
Water each dry and arid plain,
Raise up the bruised reed.
Enkindle what is cold and chill,
Relax the stiff and stubborn will,
Guide those that guidance need.

Give to the good, who find in Thee
The Spirit's perfect liberty,
Thy sevenfold power and love.
Give virtue strength its crown to win,
Give struggling souls their rest from sin,
Give endless peace above.

DEAN STANLEY, *from the Latin of Robert II.*

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